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THE EARLY LIFE
OF
THOMAS HARDY



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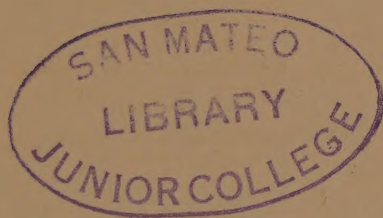
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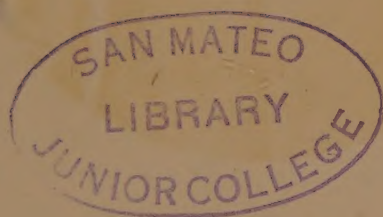


Thomas Hardy, aged 16
1856

THE EARLY LIFE OF
THOMAS HARDY
1840—1891

COMPILED LARGELY FROM
CONTEMPORARY NOTES, LETTERS, DIARIES, AND
BIOGRAPHICAL MEMORANDA, AS WELL AS FROM
ORAL INFORMATION IN CONVERSATIONS EXTEND-
ING OVER MANY YEARS

BY
FLORENCE EMILY HARDY



New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1928

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Hardy

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TO
THE DEAR MEMORY

PREFATORY NOTE

MR. HARDY'S feeling for a long time was that he would not care to have his life written at all. And though often asked to record his recollections he would say that he "had not sufficient admiration for himself" to do so. But later, having observed many erroneous and grotesque statements advanced as his experiences, and a so-called "Life" published as authoritative, his hand was forced, and he agreed to my strong request that the facts of his career should be set down for use in the event of its proving necessary to print them.

To this end he put on paper headings of chapters, etc., and, in especial, memories of his early days whenever they came into his mind, also communicating many particulars by word of mouth from time to time. In addition a great help has been given by the dated observations which he made in pocket-books, during the years of his novel-writing, apparently with the idea that if one followed the trade of fiction one must take notes, rather than from natural tendency, for when he ceased fiction and resumed the writing of verses he left off note-taking except to a very limited extent.

The opinions quoted from these pocket-books and fugitive papers are often to be understood as his passing thoughts only, temporarily jotted there for consideration, and not as permanent conclusions—a fact of which we

are reminded by his frequent remarks on the tentative character of his theories.

As such memoranda were not written with any view to their being printed, at least as they stood, and hence are often abrupt, a few words of explanation have been given occasionally.

It may be added that in the book generally Mr. Hardy's own reminiscent phrases have been used or approximated to whenever they could be remembered or were written down at the time of their expression *vivâ voce*. On this point great trouble has been taken to secure exactness.

Some incidents of his country experiences herein recorded may be considered as trivial, or as not strictly appertaining to a personal biography, but they have been included from a sense that they embody customs and manners of old West-of-England life that have now entirely passed away.

F. E. H.

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PART I

EARLY LIFE AND ARCHITECTURE

CHAPTER I

BIRTH AND BOYHOOD

1840-1855: *Act. I-15*

June 2, 1840. It was in a lonely and silent spot between woodland and heathland that Thomas Hardy was born, about eight o'clock on Tuesday morning the 2nd of June 1840, the place of his birth being the seven-roomed rambling house that stands easternmost of the few scattered dwellings called Higher Bockhampton, in the parish of Stinsford, Dorset. The domiciles were quaint, brass-knocked, and green-shuttered then, some with green garden-doors and white balls on the posts, and mainly occupied by lifeholders of substantial footing like the Hardys themselves. In the years of his infancy, or shortly preceding it, the personages tenancing these few houses included two retired military officers, one old navy lieutenant, a small farmer and tranter, a relieving officer and registrar, and an old militiaman, whose wife was the monthly nurse that assisted Thomas Hardy into the world. These being mostly elderly people, the place was at one time nicknamed "Veterans' Valley". It was also dubbed "Cherry Alley", the lane or street leading through it being planted with an avenue of cherry-trees. But the lifeholds fell into hand, and the quaint residences with their trees, clipped hedges, orchards, white gatepost-balls, the naval officer's masts and weather-cocks, have now perished every one, and have been replaced by labourers' brick cottages and other new farm-buildings, a convenient pump occupying the site of the mossy well

and bucket. The Hardy homestead, too, is weather-worn and reduced, having comprised, in addition to the house, two gardens (one of them part orchard), a horse-paddock, and sand-and-gravel pits, afterwards exhausted and overgrown: also stabling and like buildings since removed; while the leaves and mould washed down by rains from the plantation have risen high against the back wall of the house, that was formerly covered with ivy. The wide, brilliantly white chimney-corner, in his child-time such a feature of the sitting-room, is also gone.

Some Wordsworthian lines—the earliest discoverable of young Hardy's attempts in verse—give with obvious and naïve fidelity the appearance of the paternal homestead at a date nearly half a century before the birth of their writer, when his grandparents settled there, after his great-grandfather had built for their residence the first house in the valley.¹

¹ The poem, written between 1857 and 1860, runs as follows:

DOMICILIUM

It faces west, and round the back and sides
High beeches, bending, hang a veil of boughs,
And sweep against the roof. Wild honeysucks
Climb on the walls, and seem to sprout a wish
(If we may fancy wish of trees and plants)
To overtop the apple-trees hard by.

Red roses, lilacs, variegated box
Are there in plenty, and such hardy flowers
As flourish best untrained. Adjoining these
Are herbs and esculents; and farther still
A field; then cottages with trees, and last
The distant hills and sky.

Behind, the scene is wilder. Heath and furze
Are everything that seems to grow and thrive
Upon the uneven ground. A stunted thorn
Stands here and there, indeed; and from a pit
An oak uprises, springing from a seed
Dropped by some bird a hundred years ago.



THOMAS HARDY'S BIRTHPLACE
FROM A DRAWING MADE BY HIM

*Higher Bockhampton
(2. Hardy's Birthplace)*

The family, on Hardy's paternal side, like all the Hardys of the south-west, derived from the Jersey le Hardys who sailed across to Dorset for centuries—the coasts being just opposite. Hardy often thought he would like to restore the “le” to his name, and call himself “Thomas le Hardy”; but he never did so. The Dorset Hardys were traditionally said to descend in particular from a Clement le Hardy, Bailly of Jersey, whose son John settled hereabouts in the fifteenth century, having probably landed at Wareham, then a port. They all had the characteristics of an old family of spent social energies, that were revealed even in the Thomas Hardy of this memoir (as in his father and grandfather), who never cared to take advantage of the many worldly opportunities that his popularity and esteem as an author afforded him. They had dwelt for many generations in or near the valley of the River Frome or Frome, which extends inland from Wareham, occupying various properties whose sites lay scattered about from Woolcombe, Toller-Welme, and Up-Sydling, (near the higher course of the river), down the stream to Dorchester, Weymouth, and onward to Wareham, where the Frome

In days bygone—

Long gone—my father's mother, who is now
Blest with the blest, would take me out to walk.
At such a time I once inquired of her
How looked the spot when first she settled here.
The answer I remember. “Fifty years
Have passed since then, my child, and change has marked
The face of all things. Yonder garden-plots
And orchards were uncultivated slopes
O'ergrown with bramble bushes, furze and thorn:
That road a narrow path shut in by ferns,
Which, almost trees, obscured the passer-by.

“Our house stood quite alone, and those tall firs
And beeches were not planted. Snakes and efts
Swarmed in the summer days, and nightly bats
Would fly about our bedrooms. Heathcroppers
Lived on the hills, and were our only friends;
So wild it was when first we settled here.”

flows into Poole Harbour. It was a family whose diverse Dorset sections included the Elizabethan Thomas Hardy who endowed the Dorchester Grammar School, the Thomas Hardy captain of the *Victory* at Trafalgar, Thomas Hardy an influential burgess of Wareham, Thomas Hardy of Chaldon, and others of local note, the tablet commemorating the first-mentioned being still in St. Peter's Church, Dorchester, though shifted from its original position in the "Hardy Chapel", the inscription running as follows :

TO THE MEMORYE OF
THOMAS HARDY OF MELCOMBE REGIS IN THE
COUNTY OF DORSETT, ESQUIER, WHOE ENDOWED
THIS BORROUGHE WTH A YEARELY REVENUE OF
50*l.*; AND APPOYNTED OUT OF IT, TO BE EM-
PLOYED FOR Y^E BETTER MAYNTENANCE OF A
PREACHER, 20*l.*; A SCHOOLEMASTER, TWENTY
POUNDES; AN HUISHER, TWENTY NOBLES; THE
ALMES WOMEN FIVE MARKS. THE BAYLIVES
AND BURGISSES OF DORCHESTER, IN TESTIMONY
OF THEIR GRATITUDE, AND TO COMMEND TO
POSTERITY AN EXAMPLE SO WORTHY OF IMITA-
TION, HATH ERECTED THIS MONUMENT.
HE DYED THE 15 OF OCTOBER, ANNO DO: 1599.

But at the birth of the subject of this biography the family had declined, so far as its Dorset representatives were concerned, from whatever importance it once might have been able to claim there; and at his father's death the latter was, it is believed, the only landowner of the name in the county, his property being, besides the acre-and-half lifehold at Bockhampton, a small freehold farm at Talbothays, with some houses there, and about a dozen freehold cottages and a brick-yard-and-kiln elsewhere. The Talbothays farm was a small outlying property standing

detached in a ring fence, its possessors in the reign of Henry VIII. having been Talbots, from a seventeenth-century daughter of whom Hardy borrowed the name of Avis or Avice in *The Well-Beloved*.

On the maternal side he was Anglo-Saxon, being descended from the Chiles, Childs, or Childses, (who gave their name to the villages of Child-Okeford, Chilfrome, Childhay, etc.), the Swetmans, and other families of north-west Dorset that were small proprietors of lands there in the reign of Charles the First (see Hutchins' *History of Dorset*): and also from the Hanns or Hands of the Pidele Valley, Dorset, and earlier of the Vale of Blackmoor. (In the parish register of Affpuddle the spelling is Hann.) The Swetmans and the Childses seem to have been involved in the Monmouth rising, and one of the former to have been brought before Jeffreys, "for being absent from home att the tyme of the Rebellion". As his name does not appear in the lists of those executed he was probably transported, and this connection with Monmouth's adventures and misfortunes seems to have helped to becloud the family prospects of the maternal line of Hardy's ancestry, if they had ever been bright.

Several traditions survived in the Swetman family concerning the Rebellion. An indubitably true one was that after the Battle of Sedgemoor two of the Swetman daughters—Grace and Leonarde—were beset in their house by some of the victorious soldiery, and only escaped violation by slipping from the upper rooms down the back stairs into the orchard. It is said that Hardy's great-grandmother could remember them as very old women. Part of the house, now in the possession of the Earl of Ilchester, and divided into two cottages, is still standing with its old Elizabethan windows; but the hall and open oak staircase have disappeared, and also the Ham-Hill stone chimneys. The spot is called "Townsend".

Another tradition, of more doubtful authenticity, is

that to which the short story by Hardy called *The Duke's Reappearance* approximates. Certainly a mysterious man did come to Swetman after the battle, but it was generally understood that he was one of Monmouth's defeated officers.

Thomas Hardy's maternal grandmother Elizabeth, or Betty, was the daughter of one of those Swetmans by his wife Maria Childs, sister of the Christopher Childs who married into the Cave family, became a mining engineer in Cornwall, and founded the *West Briton* newspaper, his portrait being painted when he was about eighty by Sir Charles Eastlake. The traditions about Betty, Maria's daughter, were that she was tall, handsome, had thirty gowns, was an omnivorous reader, and one who owned a stock of books of exceptional extent for a yeoman's daughter living in a remote place.¹

She knew the writings of Addison, Steele, and others of the *Spectator* group almost by heart, was familiar with Richardson and Fielding, and, of course, with such standard works as *Paradise Lost* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*. From the old medical books in her possession she doctored half the village, her sheet-anchor being Culpepper's *Herbal* and *Dispensary*; and if ever there was any doubt as to the position of particular graves in the churchyard, the parson, sexton, and relatives applied to her as an unerring authority.

But alas for her fortunes! Her bright intelligence in a literary direction did not serve her in domestic life. After her mother's death she clandestinely married a young man

¹ A curious reminiscence by her daughter bears testimony to her rather striking features. She was crossing the fields with the latter as a child, a few years after Waterloo, when a gentleman shouted after her: "A relation of Wellington's? You must be! That nose!" He excitedly followed them till they were frightened, jumping over stiles till they reached home. He was found to be an officer who had fought under Wellington, and had been wounded in the head, so that he was at times deranged.

of whom her father strongly disapproved. The sturdy yeoman, apparently a severe and unyielding parent, never forgave her, and never would see her again. His unbending temper is illustrated by the only anecdote known of him. A fortune-telling gipsy had encamped on the edge of one of his fields, and on a Sunday morning he went to order her away. Finding her obdurate he said: "If you don't take yourself off I'll have you burnt as a witch!" She pulled his handkerchief from his pocket, and threw it into her fire, saying, "If that burn I burn". The flames curled up round the handkerchief, which was his best, of India silk, but it did not burn, and she handed it back to him intact. The tale goes that he was so impressed by her magic that he left her alone.

Not so long after the death of this stern father of Elizabeth's—Hardy's maternal great-grandfather—her husband also died, leaving her with several children, the youngest only a few months old. Her father, though in comfortable circumstances, had bequeathed her nothing, and she was at her wit's end to maintain herself and her family, if ever widow was. Among Elizabeth's children there was one, a girl, of unusual ability and judgment, and an energy that might have carried her to incalculable issues. This was the child Jemima, the mother of Thomas Hardy. By reason of her parent's bereavement and consequent poverty under the burden of a young family, Jemima saw during girlhood and young womanhood some very stressful experiences of which she could never speak in her maturer years without pain, though she appears to have mollified her troubles by reading every book she could lay hands on. Moreover she turned her manual activities to whatever came in her way; grew to be exceptionally skilled in, among other things, "tambouring" gloves; also was good at mantua-making, and excellent in the oddly dissimilar occupation of cookery. She resolved to be a cook in a London club-house; but her plans in this

direction were ended by her meeting her future husband, and being married to him at the age of five-and-twenty.

He carried on an old-established building and master-masonry business (the designation of "builder", denoting a manager of and contractor for all trades, was then unknown in the country districts). It was occasionally extensive, demanding from twelve to fifteen men, but frequently smaller; and the partner with whom she had thrown in her lot, though in substantial circumstances and unexceptionable in every other way, did not possess the art of enriching himself by business. Moreover he was devoted to church music, and secondarily to mundane, of the country-dance, hornpipe, and early waltz description, as had been his father, and was his brother also. It may be mentioned that an ancestral Thomas Hardy, living in Dorchester in 1724, was a subscriber to "Thirty Select Anthems in Score", by Dr. W. Croft, organist of the Chapel Royal and Westminster Abbey, which seems to show that the family were interested in church music at an early date.

Jemima's husband's father, our subject's grandfather, (the first Thomas of three in succession), when a young man living at Puddletown before the year 1800, had expressed his strong musical bias by playing the violoncello in the church of that parish. He had somewhat improvidently married at one-and-twenty, whereupon his father John had set him up in business by purchasing a piece of land at Bockhampton in the adjoining parish of Stinsford, and building a house for him there. On removing with his wife in 1801 to this home provided by his father John, Thomas Hardy the First (of these Stinsford Hardys) found the church music there in a deplorable condition, it being conducted from the gallery by a solitary old man with an oboe. He immediately set himself, with the easy-going vicar's hearty concurrence, to improve it, and got together some instrumentalists, himself taking the bass-viol as

mother - Jemima

before, which he played in the gallery of Stinsford Church at two services every Sunday from 1801 or 1802 till his death in 1837, being joined later by his two sons, who, with other reinforcement, continued playing till about 1842, the period of performance by the three Hardys thus covering inclusively a little under forty years.

It was, and is, an interesting old church of various styles from Transition-Norman to late Perpendicular. In its vaults lie many members of the Grey and Pitt families, the latter collaterally related to the famous Prime Minister; there also lies the actor and dramatist William O'Brien with his wife Lady Susan, daughter of the first Earl of Ilchester, whose secret marriage in 1764 with the handsome Irish comedian whom Garrick had discovered and brought to Drury Lane caused such scandal in aristocratic circles. "Even a footman were preferable" wrote Walpole. "I could not have believed that Lady Susan would have stooped so low."

Though in these modern days the "stooping" might have been viewed inversely—for O'Brien, besides being *jeune premier* at Drury, was an accomplished and well-read man, whose presentations of the gay Lothario in Rowe's *Fair Penitent*, Brisk in *The Double Dealer*, Sir Harry Wildair in *The Constant Couple*, Archer in *The Beaux' Stratagem*, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, the Prince in *Henry the Fourth*, and many other leading parts, made him highly popular, and whose own plays were of considerable merit. His marriage annihilated a promising career, for his wife's father would not hear of his remaining on the stage. The coincidence that both young Hardy's grandmothers had seen and admired O'Brien, that he was one of the Stinsford congregation for many years, that young Thomas's great-grandfather and grandfather had known him well, and that the latter as the local builder had constructed the vault for him and his wife (according to the builder's old Day-books still in existence his workmen drank nineteen quarts of

beer over the job); had been asked by her to "make it just large enough for our two selves only", had placed them in it, and erected their monument, lent the occupants of the little vault in the chancel a romantic interest in the boy's mind at an early age.

In this church (see the annexed plan, which is reproduced from a drawing made by Hardy many years ago under the supervision of his father) the Hardys became well known as violinists, Thomas the Second, the poet and novelist's father aforesaid, after his early boyhood as chorister beginning as a youth with the "counter" viol, and later taking on the tenor and treble.

They were considered among the best church-players in the neighbourhood, accident having helped their natural bent. This was the fact that in 1822, shortly after the death of the old vicar Mr. Floyer, the Rev. Edward Murray, a connection of the Earl of Ilchester, who was the patron of the living, was presented to it. Mr. Murray was an ardent musician and performer on the violin himself, and the two younger Hardys and sometimes their father used to practise two or three times a week with him in his study at Stinsford House, where he lived instead of at the Vicarage.

Thus it was that the Hardy instrumentalists, though never more than four, maintained an easy superiority over the larger bodies in parishes near. For while Puddletown west-gallery, for instance, could boast of eight players, and Maiden Newton of nine, these included wood-wind and leather—that is to say, clarionets and serpents—which were apt to be a little too sonorous, even strident, when zealously blown. But the few and well practised violists of Stinsford were never unduly emphatic, according to tradition.

Elaborate Canticle services, such as the noted "Jackson in F", and in "E flat"—popular in the west of England, possibly because Jackson had been an Exeter

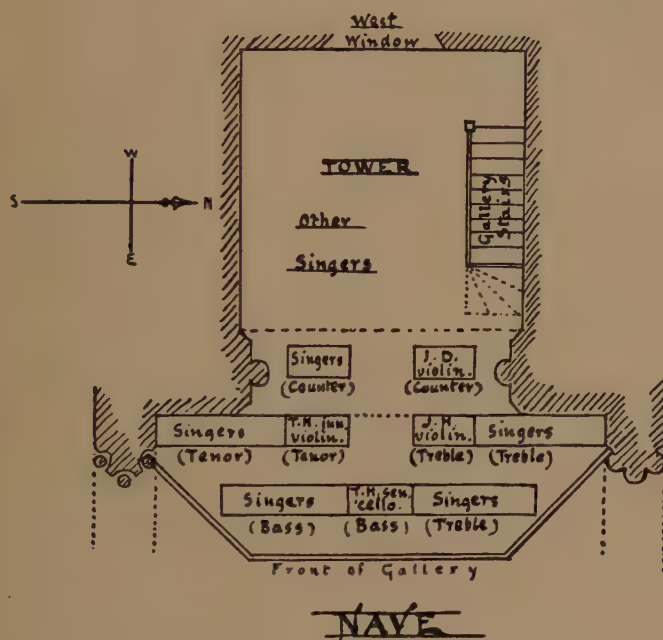
STINFORD CHURCH.

Plan of West Gallery - circa 1835,

Shewing Positions of Choir.

Explanation

T.H. sen.	Tho Hardy	b. 1778. d. 1837.
T.H. jun.	Tho Hardy	b. 1811. d. 1892.
J.H.	James Hardy	b. 1805. d. 188-
J.D.	James Dart	b. 181-. d. 187-



man—Pope's Ode, and anthems with portentous repetitions and "mountainous fugues", were carried through by the performers every Sunday, with what real success is not known, but to their own great satisfaction and the hearty approval of the musical vicar.

In their psalmody they adhered strictly to Tate-and-Brady—upon whom, in truth, the modern hymn-book has been no great improvement—such tunes as the "Old Hundredth", "New Sabbath", "Devizes", "Wilton", "Lydia", and "Cambridge New" being their staple ones; while "Barthélémon" and "Tallis" were played to Ken's Morning and Evening Hymns respectively every Sunday throughout the year: a practice now obsolete, but a great stimulus to congregational singing.

As if the superintendence of the Stinsford choir were not enough distraction from business for Thomas Hardy the First, he would go whenever opportunity served and assist other choirs by performing with his violoncello in the galleries of their parish churches, mostly to the high contentment of the congregations. Although Thomas the Third had not come into the world soon enough to know his grandfather in person, there is no doubt that the description by Fairway in *The Return of the Native* of the bowing of Thomasin's father, when lending his services to the choir of Kingsbere, is a humorous exaggeration of the traditions concerning Thomas Hardy the First's musical triumphs as locum-tenens.

In addition it may be mentioned that he had been a volunteer till the end of the war, and lay in Weymouth with his company from time to time, waiting for Bonaparte who never came.

Conducting the church choir all the year round involved carol-playing and singing at Christmas, which Thomas Hardy the Second loved as much as did his father. In addition to the ordinary practice, the work of preparing and copying carols a month of evenings beforehand was not

light, and incidental expenses were appreciable. The parish being a large and scattered one, it was the custom of Thomas Hardy the First to assemble the rather perfunctory rank-and-file of the choir at his house; and this necessitated suppers, and suppers demanded (in those days) plenty of liquor. This was especially the case on Christmas Eve itself, when the rule was to go to the northern part of the parish and play at every house before supper; then to return to Bockhampton and sit over the meal till twelve o'clock, during which interval a good deal was consumed at the Hardys' expense, the choir being mainly poor men and hungry. They then started for the other parts of the parish, and did not get home till all was finished at about six in the morning, the performers themselves feeling "no more than malkins"¹ in church next day, as they used to declare. The practice was kept up by Thomas Hardy the Second, much as described in *Under the Greenwood Tree* or *The Mellstock Quire*, though its author, Thomas Hardy the Third, invented the personages, incidents, manners, etc., never having seen or heard the choir as such, they ending their office when he was about a year old. He was accustomed to say that on this account he had rather burlesqued them, the story not so adequately reflecting as he could have wished in later years the poetry and romance that coloured their time-honoured observances.

This preoccupation of the Hardys with the music of the parish church and less solemn assemblies did not, to say the least, assist their building business, and it was somewhat of a relief to Thomas Hardy the Second's young wife—though musical herself to a degree—when ecclesiastical changes after the death of Thomas Hardy the First, including the cession of the living by Murray, led to her husband's abandoning in 1841 or 1842 all connection with the choir. The First Thomas's death having been quite unexpected, inasmuch as he was playing in the church

¹ *Malkin*, a damp rag for swabbing out an oven.

one Sunday, and brought in for burial on the next, there could be no such quiring over his grave as he had performed over the graves of so many, owing to the remaining players being chief mourners. And thus ended his devoted musical services to Stinsford Church, in which he had occupied the middle seat of the gallery with his bass-viol on Sundays for a period of thirty-five years—to no worldly profit; far the reverse, indeed.

After his death the building and masoning business also saw changes, being carried on by his widow, her sons assisting—an unsatisfactory arrangement which ultimately led to the division of the goodwill between the brothers.

The second Thomas Hardy, the author's father, was a man who in his prime could be, and was, called handsome. To the courtesy of his manners there was much testimony among the local county-ladies with whom he came in contact as a builder. All the Dorset Hardys have more or less a family likeness (of which the Admiral may be considered the middle type), and the present one was a good specimen. He was about five feet nine in height, of good figure, with dark Vandyke-brown hair, and a beard which he wore cut back all round in the custom of his date; with teeth that were white and regular to nearly the last years of his life, and blue eyes that never faded grey; a quick step, and a habit of bearing his head a little to one side as he walked. He carried no stick or umbrella till past middle-life, and was altogether an open-air liver, and a great walker always. He was good, too, when young, at hornpipes and jigs, and other folk-dances, performing them with all the old movements of leg-crossing and hop, to the delight of the children, till warned by his wife that this fast perishing style might tend to teach them what it was not quite necessary they should be familiar with, the more genteel "country-dance" having superseded the former.

Mrs. Hardy once described him to her son as he was when she first set eyes on him in the now removed

west gallery of Stinsford Church, appearing to her more travelled glance (she had lived for a time in London, Weymouth, and other towns) and somewhat satirical vision, "rather amusingly old-fashioned, in spite of being decidedly good-looking—wearing the blue swallow-tailed coat with gilt embossed buttons then customary, a red and black flowered waistcoat, Wellington boots, and French-blue trousers". The sonnet which follows expresses her first view of him.

A CHURCH ROMANCE

(MELLSTOCK, *circa* 1836)

She turned in the high pew, until her sight
Swept the west gallery, and caught its row
Of music-men with viol, book, and bow
Against the sinking, sad tower-window light.

She turned again; and in her pride's despite
One strenuous viol's inspirer seemed to throw
A message from his string to her below,
Which said: "I claim thee as my own forthright!"

Thus their hearts' bond began, in due time signed,
And long years thence, when Age had scared Romance,
At some old attitude of his or glance
That gallery-scene would break upon her mind,
With him as minstrel, ardent, young, and trim,
Bowing "New Sabbath" or "Mount Ephraim".

Mrs. Hardy herself was rather below the middle height with chestnut hair and grey eyes, and a trim and upright figure. Her movement also in walking being buoyant through life, strangers approaching her from behind imagined themselves, even when she was nearly seventy, about to overtake quite a young woman. The Roman nose and countenance inherited from her mother would better have suited a taller build. Like her mother, too, she read omnivorously. She sang songs of the date, such as the then

popular Haynes Bayly's "Isle of Beauty", and "Gaily the Troubadour"; also "Why are you wandering here, I pray?" and "Jeannette and Jeannot". The children had a quaint old piano for their practice, over which she would sigh because she could not play it herself.

Thomas Hardy the Third, their eldest child of a family of four (and the only one of the four who married, so that he had no blood-nephew or niece), showed not the physique of his father. Had it not been for the commonsense of the estimable woman who attended as monthly nurse, he might never have walked the earth. At his birth he was thrown aside as dead till rescued by her as she exclaimed to the surgeon, "Dead! Stop a minute: he's alive enough, sure!"

Of his infancy nothing has been handed down save the curious fact that on his mother's returning from out-of-doors one hot afternoon, to him asleep in his cradle, she found a large snake curled up upon his breast, comfortably asleep like himself. It had crept into the house from the heath hard by, where there were many.

Though healthy he was fragile, and precocious to a degree, being able to read almost before he could walk, and to tune a violin when of quite tender years. He was of ecstatic temperament, extraordinarily sensitive to music, and among the endless jigs, hornpipes, reels, waltzes, and country-dances that his father played of an evening in his early married years, and to which the boy danced a *pas seul* in the middle of the room, there were three or four that always moved the child to tears, though he strenuously tried to hide them. Among the airs (though he did not know their names at that time) were, by the way, "Enrico" (popular in the Regency), "The Fairy Dance", "Miss Macleod of Ayr" (an old Scotch tune to which Burns may have danced), and a melody named "My Fancy-Lad" or, "Johnny's gone to sea". This peculiarity in himself troubled the mind of "Tommy" as he was called, and set

him wondering at a phenomenon to which he ventured not to confess. He used to say in later life that, like Calantha in Ford's *Broken Heart*, he danced on at these times to conceal his weeping. He was not over four years of age at this date.

One or two more characteristics of his personality at this childhood-time can be recounted. In those days the staircase at Bockhampton (later removed) had its walls coloured Venetian red by his father, and was so situated that the evening sun shone into it, adding to its colour a great intensity for a quarter of an hour or more. Tommy used to wait for this chromatic effect, and, sitting alone there, would recite to himself "And now another day is gone" from Dr. Watts's Hymns, with great fervency, though perhaps not for any religious reason, but from a sense that the scene suited the lines.

It is not therefore to be wondered at that a boy of this sort should have a dramatic sense of the church services, and on wet Sunday mornings should wrap himself in a tablecloth, and read the Morning Prayer standing in a chair, his cousin playing the clerk with loud Amens, and his grandmother representing the congregation. The sermon which followed was simply a patchwork of the sentences used by the vicar. Everybody said that Tommy would have to be a parson, being obviously no good for any practical pursuit; which remark caused his mother many misgivings.

One event of this date or a little later stood out, he used to say, more distinctly than any. He was lying on his back in the sun, thinking how useless he was, and covered his face with his straw hat. The sun's rays streamed through the interstices of the straw, the lining having disappeared. Reflecting on his experiences of the world so far as he had got, he came to the conclusion that he did not wish to grow up. Other boys were always talking of when they would be men; he did not want at all to be a

man, or to possess things, but to remain as he was, in the same spot and to know no more people than he already knew (about half a dozen). Yet this early evidence of that lack of social ambition which followed him through life was shown when he was in perfect health and happy circumstances.

Afterwards he told his mother of his conclusions on existence, thinking she would enter into his views. But to his great surprise she was very much hurt, which was natural enough considering she had been near death's door in bringing him forth. And she never forgot what he had said, a source of much regret to him in after years.

When but little older he was puzzled by what seemed to him a resemblance between two marches of totally opposite sentiments—"See the conquering hero comes", and "The Dead March in *Saul*". Some dozen years were to pass before he discovered that they were by the same composer.

It may be added here that his sensitiveness to melody, though he was no skilled musician, remained with him through life.

1848. FIRST SCHOOL

Until his fifth or sixth year his parents hardly supposed he would survive to grow up, but at eight he was thought strong enough to go to the village school, to learn the rudiments before being sent further afield; and by a curious coincidence he was the first pupil to enter the new school-building, arriving on the day of opening, and awaiting tremulously and alone, in the empty room, the formal entry of the other scholars two-and-two with the school-master and mistress from the temporary premises near. The school is still standing much in its original condition.

Here he worked at Walkingame's Arithmetic and at geography, in both of which he excelled, though his handwriting was indifferent. About this time his mother gave

him Dryden's *Virgil*, Johnson's *Rasselas*, and *Paul and Virginia*. He also found in a closet *A History of the Wars*—a periodical dealing with the war with Napoleon, which his grandfather had subscribed to at the time, having been himself a volunteer. The torn pages of these contemporary numbers with their melodramatic prints of serried ranks, crossed bayonets, huge knapsacks, and dead bodies, were the first to set him on the train of ideas that led to *The Trumpet-Major* and *The Dynasts*.

A JOURNEY

The boy Thomas's first experience of travel was when, at eight or nine years old, his mother took him with her—"for protection", as she used to say—being then an attractive and still young woman—on a visit to her sister in Hertfordshire. As the visit lasted three weeks or a month he was sent while there to a private school, which appears to have been somewhat on the Squeers model. Since, however, he was only a day-scholar this did not affect him much, though he was mercilessly tyrannized over by the bigger boys whom he could beat hollow in arithmetic and geography.

Their return from this visit was marked by an experience which became of interest in the light of after events. The Great Northern Railway to London was then only in process of construction, and it was necessary to go thither by coach from Hertfordshire in order to take the train at Waterloo Station for Dorchester. Mrs. Hardy had not been to London since she had lived there for some months twelve years earlier. The coaching-inn was The Cross-Keys, St. John Street, Clerkenwell, and here mother and boy put up for the night. It was the inn at which Shelley and Mary Godwin had been accustomed to meet at week-ends not two-score years before, and was at this time unaltered from its state during the lovers' romantic

experiences there—the oval stone staircase, the skylight, and the hotel entrance being untouched. As Mrs. Hardy and her little boy took a room rather high up the staircase for economy, and the poet had probably done so for the same reason, there is a possibility that it may have been the same as that occupied by our most marvellous lyricist.

They stayed but a short time in London, but long enough for him to see and remember some of the streets, the Pantheon, then a fashionable Pantechnicon, Cumberland Gate into Hyde Park, which then could boast of no Marble Arch, and the pandemonium of Smithfield, with its mud, curses, and cries of ill-treated animals. Also, that when passing through the city on the way up, they stopped at the point now called Swiss Cottage, and looked back at the *outside* of London creeping towards them across green fields.

1849-1850

By another year he was judged to be strong enough to walk further than to the village school, and after some postponements he was sent to a Dorchester day-school, whose headmaster his mother had learnt to be an exceptionally able man, and a good teacher of Latin, which was quite enough to lead her to waive the fact that the school was Nonconformist, though she had no nonconforming tendencies whatever.

It is somewhat curious, and shows the honour with which the school was conducted, that the boy did not know till he had been there several months that it was a Nonconformist school, a large number, probably a majority, of the boys coming like himself from Church-of-England homes, having been attracted thither by the reputation of the said master; though Thomas used to wonder why the familiar but rather boring Church Catechism had vanished—or rather all of it except the Ten Commandments, in

which the pupils were made proficient once a week. However, though nominally unorthodox during the week Thomas was kept strictly at church on Sundays as usual, till he knew the Morning and Evening Services by heart including the rubrics, as well as large portions of the New Version of the Psalms. The aspect of that time to him is clearly indicated in the verses "Afternoon Service at Mellstock", included in *Moments of Vision*.

The removal of the boy from Bockhampton school seriously wounded the lady of the manor who had erected it, though she must have guessed that he had only been sent there till sturdy enough to go further. To his mother this came as an unpleasant misunderstanding. While not wishing to be uncivil she had, naturally, not consulted the other at all in taking him away, considering his interests solely, the Hardys being comparatively independent of the manor, as their house and the adjoining land were a family lifehold, and the estate-work forming only part of Mr. Hardy's business. That the school to which he was removed was not a Church-of-England one was another rock of offence to this too sensitive lady, though, as has been stated, it was an accident as unwished by the boy's mother as by the squire's wife. The latter had just built a model school at her own expense and, though it was but small, had provided it with a well-trained master and mistress; had made it her hobby, till it was far superior to an ordinary village school. Moreover under her dignity lay a tender heart, and having no children of her own she had grown passionately fond of Tommy almost from his infancy—he is said to have been an attractive little fellow at this time—whom she had been accustomed to take into her lap and kiss until he was quite a big child. He quite reciprocated her fondness.

Shortly before or after the boy's removal the estate-building work was taken out of the hands of Tommy's father, who went farther afield to replace it, soon ob-

taining a mansion to enlarge, and other contracts, and thus not suffering much from his loss of business in the immediate vicinity of his home. He would have left the parish altogether, the house his grandfather John had built for his father Thomas the First, as stated, being awkwardly small and ill-arranged, and the spot inconvenient for a builder. But as the rambling dwelling, field, and sandpits attached were his for life, he remained.

Thomas Hardy the youngest, however, secretly mourned the loss of his friend the landowner's wife, to whom he had grown more attached than he cared to own. In fact, though he was only nine or ten and she must have been nearly forty, his feeling for her was almost that of a lover. He had been wont to make drawings of animals in water-colours for her, and to sing to her, one of his songs being "I've journeyed over many lands, I've sailed on every sea", which was comical enough considering the extent of his travels. He so much longed to see her that he jumped at the offer of a young woman of the village to take him to a harvest-supper at which he knew she would be present, one of the farms on the estate being carried on by the landowner himself as a hobby, with the aid of a bailiff—much to his pecuniary loss as it turned out. The young woman, a small farmer's daughter, called for young Thomas on the afternoon of the festivity. Together they went off, his mother being away from home, though they left word where he had gone. The "Supper", an early meal at that date, probably about four o'clock, was over by the time they reached the barn, and tea was going on, after which there was singing and dancing, some non-commissioned officers having been invited from the barracks by the Squire as partners for the girls. The Squire showed himself by no means strait-laced in this respect. What his wife thought is not recorded. It may be remarked in

passing that here probably began Thomas's extensive acquaintance with soldiers of the old uniforms and long service, which was to serve him in good stead when he came to write *The Trumpet-Major* and *The Dynasts*.

Presently the manor-lady, her husband, and a house-party arrived to lead off some dances. As soon as she saw little Thomas—who had no business whatever there—she came up to him and said reproachfully: "O Tommy, how is this? I thought you had deserted me!"

Tommy assured her through his tears that he had not deserted her, and never would desert her: and then the dance went on. He being wildly fond of dancing, she gave him for a partner a little niece of hers about his own age staying at her house, who had come with her. The manor-house party remained for a few figures and then left, but Tommy perforce stayed on, being afraid to go home without the strapping young woman his companion, who was dancing with the soldiers. There he wearily waited for her till three in the morning, having eaten and drunk nothing since one o'clock on the previous day, through his fear of asking the merry-makers for food. What the estate owner's tender wife would have given him had she but known of his hunger and thirst, and how carefully have sent him home had she been aware of his dilemma! A reproof from both his parents when Tommy reached home ended the day's adventure. It was the only harvest-supper and dance that he ever saw, save one that he dropped into by chance years after.

In spite of his lover-like promise of fidelity to her ladyship, the two never met again till he was a young man of twenty-two, and she quite an elderly woman; though it was not his fault, her husband selling the estate shortly after and occupying a house in London.

It may be worthy of note that this harvest-home was among the last at which the old traditional ballads were sung, the railway having been extended to Dorchester just

then, and the orally transmitted ditties of centuries being slain at a stroke by the London comic songs that were introduced. The particular ballad which he remembered hearing that night from the lips of the farm-women was that one variously called "The Outlandish Knight", "May Colvine", "The Western Tragedy", etc. He could recall to old age the scene of the young women in their light gowns sitting on a bench against the wall in the barn, and leaning against each other as they warbled the Dorset version of the ballad, which differed a little from the northern:

"Lie there, lie there, thou false-hearted man,
Lie there instead o' me;
For six pretty maidens thou hast a-drown'd here,
But the seventh hath drown-ed thee!"

.

"O tell no more, my pretty par-rot,
Lay not the blame on me;
And your cage shall be made o' the glittering gold,
Wi' a door o' the white ivo-rie!"

The question of moving from the parish, above alluded to, and taking more commodious premises nearer to or in the town, again arose with the Hardys—was, indeed, always arising. An opportunity to develop her husband's business which a more convenient centre would have afforded him had been long in Mrs. Hardy's perception, and she thought he should seek it for the sake of his growing family. It must be admitted that a lonely spot between a heath and a wood, the search for which by messengers and other people of affairs often became wearisomely tedious to them, was almost unreasonable as a place for carrying on the building trade. But Thomas Hardy the Second had not the tradesman's soul. Instead of waylaying possible needers of brick and stone in the market-place or elsewhere, he liked going alone into the

woods or on the heath, where, with a telescope inherited from some collateral ancestor who had been captain of a merchant craft, he would stay peering into the distance by the half-hour; or, in the hot weather, lying on a bank of thyme or camomile with the grasshoppers leaping over him. Among his son's other childish memories were those of seeing men in the stocks, corn-law agitations, mail-coaches, road-waggon, tinder-boxes, and candle-snuffing. When still a small boy he was taken by his father to witness the burning in effigy of the Pope and Cardinal Wiseman in the old Roman Amphitheatre at Dorchester during the No-Popery Riots. The sight to young Hardy was most lurid, and he never forgot it; and when the cowl of one of the monks in the ghastly procession blew aside and revealed the features of one of his father's workmen his bewilderment was great.

His earliest recollection was of receiving from his father the gift of a small accordion. He knew that he was but four years old at this time, as his name and the date were written by his father upon the toy: Thomas Hardy. 1844.

Another memory, some two or three years later, is connected with the Corn Law Agitation. The boy had a little wooden sword, which his father had made for him, and this he dipped into the blood of a pig which had just been killed, and brandished it as he walked about the garden exclaiming: "Free Trade or blood!"

A member of his family recalled, even after an interval of sixty years, the innocent glee with which the young Thomas and his mother would set off on various expeditions. They were excellent companions, having each a keen sense of humour and a love of adventure. Hardy would tell of one prank when he and his mother put on fantastic garb, pulling cabbage-nets over their faces to disguise themselves. Thus oddly dressed they walked across the

heath to visit a sister of Mrs. Hardy, living at Puddletown, whose amazement was great when she set eyes upon these strange visitors at her door.

It was natural that with the imitateness of a boy he should at an early age have attempted to perform on the violin, and under his father's instruction was soon able to tweedle from notation some hundreds of jigs and country-dances that he found in his father's and grandfather's old books. From tuning fiddles as a boy he went on as a youth in his teens to keep his mother's old table-piano in tune whenever he had the time, and was worried by "The Wolf" in a musical octave, which he thought a defect in his own ear.

One other experience of his boyhood may be mentioned which, though comical in itself, gave him much mental distress. This was at church when listening to the sermon. Some mischievous movement of his mind set him imagining that the vicar was preaching mockingly, and he began trying to trace a humorous twitch in the corners of Mr. S——'s mouth, as if he could hardly keep a serious countenance. Once having imagined this the impish boy found to his consternation that he could not dismiss the idea. Like Sterne in the pulpit, the vicar seemed to be "always tottering on the verge of laughter", and hence against his will Thomas could scarcely control his merriment, till it became a positive discomfort to him.

By good fortune the report that the schoolmaster was an able teacher turned out to be true—and finding that he had an apt pupil who galloped unconcernedly over the ordinary school lessons, he either agreed to Hardy's parents' proposal, or proposed himself, that he should teach the boy Latin immediately, Latin being considered an extra.

1852

So at twelve years of age young Thomas was started on the old Eton grammar and readings in Eutropius and Caesar. Though extraordinarily quick in acquisition he was undoubtedly rather an idle schoolboy; and in respect of the grammar, having, like so many thousands of schoolboys before him, been worried by the "*Propria quae maribus*", he devised a plan for saving himself trouble in learning the genders by colouring the nouns in three tints respectively; but whether he profited much by his plan is not known. Once, many years after, he deplored to a friend, a classical scholar and Fellow of his college, that he had been taught from the venerable Etonian "*Introduction to the Latin Tongue*", and not from the celebrated new Latin primer which came out later. His friend said grimly: "The old one was just as good as the new."

But despite the classics and his general bookishness he loved adventures with the fiddle, both now and far on towards young manhood, though it was strange that his mother, a "progressive" woman, ambitious on his account though not her own, did not object to these performances. Possibly it was from a feeling that they would help to teach him what life was. His father, however, objected to them strongly, though as he himself had not been averse to them when young he could hardly do other than wink at them. So little Thomas played sometimes at village weddings, at one of which the bride, all in white, kissed him in her intense pleasure at the dance; once at a New Year's Eve party in the house of the tailor who had breeched him; also in farmers' parlours; and on another occasion at a homestead where he was stopped by his hostess clutching his bow-arm at the end of a three-quarter-hour's unbroken footing to his notes by twelve tireless couples in the favourite country-dance of "*The New-Rigged Ship*". The matron had done it lest he should "burst a blood-

vessel", fearing the sustained exertion to be too much for a boy of thirteen or fourteen.

He had always been told by his mother that he must on no account take any payment for these services as fiddler, but on one occasion temptation was too strong. A hatful of pennies was collected, amounting to four or five shillings, and Thomas had that morning seen in a shop in Dorchester a copy of *The Boys' Own Book* which could be bought with about this sum. He accepted the money and soon owned the coveted volume. His mother shook her head over the transaction, and refused to see any merit in a book which was chiefly about games. This volume was carefully kept, and remained in his library to the end of his life.

Among the queer occurrences accompanying these merry minstrellings may be described one that happened when he was coming home with his father at three in the morning from a gentleman-farmer's house where he had been second violin to his senior's first for six or seven hours, his father for some reason having had a generous wish to oblige the entertainers to the full. It was bitterly cold, and the moon glistened bright upon the encrusted snow, amid which they saw motionless in the hedge what appeared to be a white human figure without a head. The boy, being very tired, with finger-tips tingling from pressing the strings, was for passing the ghastly sight quickly, but the elder went up to the object, which proved to be a very tall thin man in a long white smock-frock, leaning against the bank in a drunken stupor, his head hanging forward so low that at a distance he had seemed to have no head at all. Hardy senior, seeing the danger of leaving the man where he might be frozen to death, awoke him after much exertion, and they supported him to a cottage near, where he lived, and pushed him in through the door, their ears being greeted as they left with a stream of abuse from the man's wife, which was also vented upon

her unfortunate husband, whom she promptly knocked down. Hardy's father remarked that it might have been as well to leave him where he was, to take his chance of being frozen to death.

At this age Thomas also loved reading Dumas *père's* romances, which he did in an English translation, and Shakespeare's tragedies for the plots only, not thinking much of *Hamlet* because the ghost did not play his part up to the end as he ought to have done.

1853-1854

A year or two later his accomplished schoolmaster opened a more advanced school called an Academy, where boarders were taken. His abilities had in fact attracted the notice of parents and guardians, and but for an affection of the chest which compelled him later to give up teaching he would no doubt have been heard of further afield. (His son, it may be observed, became a well-known science-master at South Kensington.) Hardy followed him to the new school—the Grammar-school founded by his namesake being reported to be indifferent just then—and remained there all the rest of his school life, thus continuing his Latin under the same teacher, and winning the prize of Beza's Latin Testament for his progress in the tongue—a little pocket edition which he often carried with him in after years. His course of instruction also included elementary drawing, advanced arithmetic, geometry, and algebra, in which he was fairly good, always saying that he found a certain poetry in the rule for the extraction of the cube-root, owing to its rhythm, and in some of the "Miscellaneous Questions" of Walkingame. In applied mathematics he worked completely through Tate's *Mechanics* and Nesbitt's *Mensuration*.

Hardy was popular—too popular almost—with his school-fellows, for their friendship at times became

burdensome. He loved being alone, but often, to his concealed discomfort, some of the other boys would volunteer to accompany him on his homeward journey to Bockhampton. How much this irked him he recalled long years after. He tried also to avoid being touched by his playmates. One lad, with more insight than the rest, discovered the fact: "Hardy, how is it that you do not like us to touch you?" This peculiarity never left him, and to the end of his life he disliked even the most friendly hand being laid on his arm or his shoulder. Probably no one else ever observed this.

One day at this time Hardy, then a boy of fourteen, fell madly in love with a pretty girl who passed him on horseback near the South Walk, Dorchester, as he came out of school hard by, and for some unaccountable reason smiled at him. She was a total stranger. Next day he saw her with an old gentleman, probably her father. He wandered about miserably, looking for her through several days, and caught sight of her once again—this time riding with a young man. Then she disappeared for ever. He told other boys in confidence, who sympathized, but could do nothing, though some boarders watched for her on his behalf. He was more than a week getting over this desperate attachment.

At fifteen he was sent to receive French lessons from a lady who was the French governess at the school attended by his sister, and began the study of German from a periodical in which he had become deeply interested, entitled *The Popular Educator*, published by that genius in home-education, John Cassell. Hardy's mother had begun to buy the publications of that firm for her son, and he himself continued their purchase whenever he had any pocket-money.

And it was about this date that he formed one of a trio of youths (the vicar's sons being the other two) who taught in the Sunday School of the parish, where as a pupil in

his class he had a dairymaid four years older than himself, who afterwards appeared in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* as Marian—one of the few portraits from life in his works. This pink and plump damsel had a marvellous power of memorizing whole chapters in the Bible, and would repeat to him by heart in class, to his boredom, the long gospels before Easter without missing a word, and with evident delight in her facility; though she was by no means a model of virtue in her love-affairs.

Somewhat later, though it may as well be mentioned here among other such trivialities, he lost his heart for a few days to a young girl who had come from Windsor just after he had been reading Ainsworth's *Windsor Castle*. But she disappointed him on his finding that she took no interest in Herne the Hunter or Anne Boleyn. In this kind there was another young girl, a gamekeeper's pretty daughter, who won Hardy's boyish admiration because of her beautiful bay-red hair. But she despised him, as being two or three years her junior, and married early. He celebrated her later on as "Lizbie Browne". Yet another attachment, somewhat later, which went deeper, was to a farmer's daughter named Louisa. There were more probably. They all appear, however, to have been quite fugitive, except perhaps the one for Louisa.

He believed that his attachment to this damsel was reciprocated, for on one occasion when he was walking home from Dorchester he beheld her sauntering down the lane as if to meet him. He longed to speak to her, but bashfulness overcame him, and he passed on with a murmured "Good evening", while poor Louisa had no word to say.

Later he heard that she had gone to Weymouth to a boarding school for young ladies, and thither he went, Sunday after Sunday, until he discovered the church which the maiden of his affections attended with her fellow scholars. But, alas, all that resulted from these efforts was a shy smile from Louisa.

That the vision remained may be gathered from a poem "Louisa in the Lane" written not many months before his death. Louisa lies under a nameless mound in "Mellstock" churchyard. That "Good evening" was the only word that passed between them.

CHAPTER II

STUDENT AND ARCHITECT

1856-1862: *Act.* 16-21

AT sixteen, though he had just begun to be interested in French and the Latin classics, the question arose of a profession or business. His father as a builder had carried out the designs of, and so become associated with, Mr. John Hicks, an architect and church-restorer originally in practice in Bristol and now in Dorchester. Having seen Thomas Hardy junior when his father conjointly with another builder was executing Mr. Hicks's restoration of, it is believed, Woodsford Castle, and tested him by inviting him to assist at a survey, Hicks wished to have him as a pupil, offering to take him for somewhat less than the usual premium, payable in the middle of a term of three years. As the father was a ready-money man, Mrs. Hardy suggested to the architect a substantial abatement for paying down the whole premium at the beginning of the term, and to this Mr. Hicks, who was not a ready-money man, agreed. Hardy was a born bookworm, that and that alone was unchanging in him; he had sometimes, too, wished to enter the Church; but he cheerfully agreed to go to Mr. Hicks's.

JULY 1856

The architect's office was at 39 South Street, Dorchester, now part of a Temperance Hotel, though the room in which Hardy used to draw is unchanged. On arriving he

found there a pupil of twenty-one, who was at the end of his term and was just leaving; also a pupil in the first year of his articles, a year or more older than himself, who had been well educated at a good school in or near London, and who, having a liking for the classical tongues, regretted his recent necessity of breaking off his studies to take up architecture. They began later to read together, and during the ensuing two or three years often gave more time to books than to drawing. Hicks, too, was exceptionally well educated for an ordinary country architect. The son of a Gloucestershire rector, who had been a good classical scholar, he had read some Greek, and had a smattering of Hebrew (probably taught him by his father); though, rather oddly, he was less at home with Latin. He was a kindly-natured man, almost jovial, and allowed the two youths some leisure for other than architectural study, though much of Hardy's reading in the ensuing years was done between five and eight in the morning before he left home for the office. In the long summer days he would even rise at four and begin. In these circumstances he got through a moderately good number of the usual classical pages—several books of the *Aeneid*, some Horace and Ovid, etc.; and in fact grew so familiar with his authors that in his walks to and from the town he often caught himself soliloquizing in Latin on his various projects. He also took up Greek, which he had not learnt at school, getting on with some books of the *Iliad*. He once said that nearly all his reading in the last-named work had been done in the morning before breakfast.

Hicks was ahead of them in Greek, though they could beat him in Latin, and he used to ridicule their constructions, often when these were more correct than his own. When cornered and proved wrong he would take shelter behind the excuse that his school-days were longer ago than theirs.

At this time the Rev. William Barnes, the Dorset poet

and philologist, was keeping school next door. Knowing him to be an authority upon grammar Hardy would often run in to ask Barnes to decide some knotty point in dispute between him and his fellow-pupil. Hardy used to assert in later years that upon almost every occasion the verdict was given in his favour.

An unusual incident occurred during his pupillage at Hicks's which, though it had nothing to do with his own life, was dramatic enough to have mention. One summer morning at Bockhampton, just before he sat down to breakfast, he remembered that a man was to be hanged at eight o'clock at Dorchester. He took up the big brass telescope that had been handed on in the family, and hastened to a hill on the heath a quarter of a mile from the house, whence he looked towards the town. The sun behind his back shone straight on the white stone façade of the gaol, the gallows upon it, and the form of the murderer in white fustian, the executioner and officials in dark clothing and the crowd below being invisible at this distance of nearly three miles. At the moment of his placing the glass to his eye the white figure dropped downwards, and the faint note of the town clock struck eight.

The whole thing had been so sudden that the glass nearly fell from Hardy's hands. He seemed alone on the heath with the hanged man, and crept homeward wishing he had not been so curious. It was the second and last execution he witnessed, the first having been that of a woman two or three years earlier, when he stood close to the gallows.

It had so happened that Bastow, the other pupil (who, strangely enough for an architect mostly occupied with church-work, had been bred a Baptist), became very doctrinal during this time; he said he was going to be baptized, and in fact was baptized shortly after. He so

impressed young Hardy with his earnestness, and the necessity of doing likewise that, though the junior pupil had been brought up in High Church principles, he almost felt that he ought to be baptized again as an adult. He went to the vicar of his parish and stated the case. The vicar, an Oxford man, seemed bewildered, and said that the only book he possessed that might help Hardy was Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, which he lent his inquirer. Finding that this learned work did not help much in the peculiar circumstances, Hardy went to the curate of another parish with whom he was acquainted. But all that the curate had was a handbook on the Sacraments of an elementary kind.

However, he got hold of as many books and notes on Paedo-baptism as he could, and though he was appalled at the feebleness of the arguments for infant christening (assuming that New Testament practice must be followed) he incontinently determined to "stick to his own side", as he considered the Church to be, at some costs of conscience. The clash of polemics between the two pupils in the office sometimes reached such a pitch of clamour that the architect's wife would send down a message from the drawing-room, which was on the first floor over, imploring them not to make so much noise. To add to the heat, two of the Dorchester Baptist minister's sons, friends of Bastow, hard-headed Scotch youths fresh from Aberdeen University, good classics, who could rattle off at a moment's notice the Greek original of any passage in the New Testament, joined in the controversy. But though Hardy thus found himself in the position of one against three, he fought on with his back to the wall as it were—working at night at the Greek Testament to confute his opponents, and for this purpose getting a new text, Griesbach's, that he had seen advertised as the most correct, instead of his old one, and conceding to his serious-minded disputants as much as he thought a Churchman fairly could concede—namely, that he would limit his



Thomas Hardy, aged 19
c. 1859

Greek reading to the New Testament in future, giving up the heathen authors, and would show his broad-mindedness by attending a prayer-meeting in the chapel-vestry.

At half-past six on a hot August evening he entered the chapel for the meeting. Not a soul was in the building, and he waited in the dreary little vestry till the hour of appointment had passed by nearly half-an-hour, the yellow sun shining in on the drab paint through the skylight, through which also came the faint notes of a brass band. Just as he was about to leave at a quarter-past seven, Bastow and the minister's son stumbled breathlessly in, apologizing for their lateness. Cooke's then popular circus had entered the town at the moment of the prayer-meeting, and they had all dismissed the engagement for a while, and remained for the spectacle. Hardy had known the circus entry was going to take place; but he had kept his appointment faithfully. How the meeting ended Hardy had forgotten when he related the experience.

His convictions on the necessity of adult baptism gradually wore out of him. Though he was younger than his companions he seems to have possessed a breadth of mind which they lacked; and while perceiving that there was not a shred of evidence for infant baptism in the New Testament, he saw that Christianity did not hang on temporary details that expediency might modify, and that the practice of an isolated few in the early ages could not be binding on its multitudes in differing circumstances, when it had grown to be the religion of continents.

Nevertheless it would be unjust to the Baptist minister Perkins and his argumentative family to omit from these gleanings out of the past Hardy's remarks on their finer qualities. They formed an austere and frugal household, and won his admiration by their thoroughness and strenuousness. He often visited them, and one of the sons about his own age, not insistent on Baptist doctrines like his two brethren, was a great friend of Hardy's till his

death of consumption a year or two after. It was through these Scotch people that Thomas Hardy first became impressed with the necessity for "plain living and high thinking", which stood him in such good stead in later years. Among the few portraits of actual persons in Hardy's novels, that of the Baptist minister in *A Laodicean* is one—being a recognizable drawing of Perkins the father as he appeared to Hardy at this time, though the incidents are invented.

To return to the architect's pupils. The Greek Testament had been now taken up by both of them—though it had necessitated the younger's learning a new dialect—and Homer and Virgil were thrown aside (a misfortune to Hardy, who was just getting pleasure from these). In pursuing this study it became an occasional practice for the youths to take out their Testaments into the fields and sit on a gate reading them. The gate of the enclosure in Kingston-Maurward eweleaze, now the cricket-ground, was the scene of some of the readings. They were brought to an end by the expiry of Bastow's term of four years as a pupil, and his departure for the office of a London architect, which, it may be mentioned, he shortly afterwards left to start in practice on his own account in Tasmania.

1860-1861

With the departure of Bastow, Hardy's duties grew more exacting, and though, in consideration of his immaturity, the term of his pupillage had been lengthened by between one and two years, a time had arrived at which it became necessary that he should give more attention to practical architecture than he had hitherto done. Church "restoration" was at this time in full cry in Dorsetshire and the neighbouring counties, and young Hardy found himself making many surveys, measurements, and sketches of old churches with a view to such changes. Much beautiful

ancient Gothic, as well as Jacobean and Georgian work, he was passively instrumental in destroying or in altering beyond identification; a matter for his deep regret in later years.

Despite the greater demands of architecture upon his attention it appears that Hardy kept up his classics for some time after the departure of his fellow-pupil for Tasmania; since, in an old letter of Bastow's, replying to Hardy from Hobart Town in May 1861, the emigrant says:

"Really you are a plodding chap to have got through such a lot of Homer and all the rest. I am not a bit farther than I was in Dorchester; indeed, I think I have scarcely touched a book—Greek, I mean—since. I see you are trying all you can to cut me out!"

The allusion to Homer seems to show that after his earnest Baptist-senior's departure, and the weakening of his influence, Hardy, like St. Augustine, lapsed from the Greek New Testament back again to pagan writers, though he was rather impulsive than "plodding" in his studies, his strength lying in a power of keeping going in most disheartening circumstances.

Owing to the accident of his being an architect's pupil in a county-town of assizes and aldermen, which had advanced to railways and telegraphs and daily London papers; yet not living there, but walking in every day from a world of shepherds and ploughmen in a hamlet three miles off, where modern improvements were still regarded as wonders, he saw rustic and borough doings in a juxtaposition peculiarly close. To these externals may be added the peculiarities of his inner life, which might almost have been called academic—a triple existence unusual for a young man—what he used to call, in looking back, a life twisted of three strands—the professional life, the scholar's life, and the rustic life, combined in the twenty-four hours of one day, as it was with him through these years. He would be reading the *Iliad*, the *Aeneid*, or the

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Greek Testament from six to eight in the morning, would work at Gothic architecture all day, and then in the evening rush off with his fiddle under his arm, sometimes in the company of his father as first violin and uncle as 'cellist, to play country-dances, reels, and hornpipes at an agriculturist's wedding, christening, or Christmas party in a remote dwelling among the fallow fields, not returning sometimes till nearly dawn, the Hardys still being traditionally string-bandsmen available on such occasions, and having the added recommendation of charging nothing for their services, which was a firm principle with them, the entertainers being mostly acquaintances; though the tireless zeal of young couples in the dance often rendered the Hardys' act of friendship anything but an enjoyment to themselves. But young Hardy's physical vigour was now much greater than it had been when he was a child, and it enabled him, like a conjuror at a fair, to keep in the air the three balls of architecture, scholarship and dance-fiddling, without ill effects, the fiddling being of course not daily, like the other two.

His immaturity, above alluded to, was greater than is common for his years, and it may be mentioned here that a clue to much of his character and action throughout his life is afforded by his lateness of development in virility, while mentally precocious. He himself said humorously in later times that he was a child till he was sixteen, a youth till he was five-and-twenty, and a young man till he was nearly fifty. Whether this was intrinsic, or owed anything to his having lived in a remote spot in early life, is an open question.

During the years of architectural pupillage Hardy had two other literary friends in Dorchester. One was Hooper Tolbort, orphan nephew of one of the partners in a firm of mechanical engineers, who had an extraordinary facility in the acquisition of languages. He was a pupil of the Rev. W. Barnes, and was preparing for

the Indian Civil Service. The other was Horace Moule of Queens' College, Cambridge, just then beginning practice as author and reviewer. Walks in the fields with each of these friends biassed Thomas Hardy still further in the direction of books, two works among those he met with impressing him much—the newly published *Essays and Reviews* by “The Seven against Christ”, as the authors were nicknamed; and Walter Bagehot's *Estimates* (afterwards called *Literary Studies*). He began writing verses, and also a few prose articles, which do not appear to have been printed anywhere. The first effusion of his to see the light of print was an anonymous skit in a Dorchester paper on the disappearance of the Alms-House clock, which then as now stood on a bracket in South Street, the paragraph being in the form of a plaintive letter from the ghost of the clock. (It had been neglected, after having been taken down to be cleaned.) As the author was supposed to be an alderman of influence the clock was immediately replaced. He would never have been known to be Hardy but for the conspiracy of a post-office clerk, who watched the handwriting of letters posted till he had spotted the culprit. After this followed the descriptive verses “Domicilium”, and accounts of church-restorations carried out by Hicks, which Hardy prepared for the grateful reporter of the *Dorset Chronicle*.

It seems ne had also set to work on the *Agamemnon* or the *Oedipus*; but on his inquiring of Moule—who was a fine Greek scholar and was always ready to act the tutor in any classical difficulty—if he ought not to go on reading some Greek plays, Moule's reluctant opinion was that if Hardy really had (as his father had insisted, and as indeed was reasonable, since he never as yet had earned a farthing in his life) to make an income in some way by architecture in 1862, it would be hardly worth while for him to read Aeschylus or Sophocles in 1859-61. He had secretly wished

that Moule would advise him to go on with Greek plays, in spite of the serious damage it might do his architecture; but he felt bound to listen to reason and prudence. So, as much Greek as he had got he had to be content with, the language being almost dropped from that date; for though he did take up one or two of the dramatists again some years later, it was in a fragmentary way only. Nevertheless his substantial knowledge of them was not small.

It may be permissible to ponder whether Hardy's career might not have been altogether different if Moule's opinion had been the contrary one, and he had advised going on with Greek plays. The younger man would hardly have resisted the suggestion, and might have risked the consequences, so strong was his bias that way. The upshot might have been his abandonment of architecture for a University career, his father never absolutely refusing to advance him money in a good cause. Having every instinct of a scholar he might have ended his life as a Don of whom it could be said that

He settled *Hoti's* business,
Properly based *Oun*.

But this was not to be, and it was possibly better so.

One other Dorchester young man, who has been cursorily mentioned—the pupil of Hicks's whose time had expired shortly after Hardy's arrival, and who then departed permanently from the west of England—may be again given a word for the single thing about him that had attracted the fresh-comer—his one or two trips to London during their passing acquaintance, and his return thence whistling quadrilles and other popular music, with accounts of his dancing experiences at the Argyle Rooms and Cremorne, both then in full swing. Hardy would relate that one quadrille in particular his precursor Fippard could whistle faultlessly, and while giving it would caper about the office to an imaginary dance-figure, embracing

an imaginary Cremorne or Argyle *danseuse*. The fascinating quadrille remained with Hardy all his life, but he never could identify it. Being some six years the junior of this comet-like young man, Hardy was treated by him with the superciliousness such a boy usually gets from such seniority, and with the other's departure from Dorchester he passed quite out of Hardy's knowledge.

CHAPTER III

WORK IN LONDON

1862-1867: *Act.* 21-27

A NEW START

ON Thursday April 17, 1862, Thomas Hardy started alone for London, to pursue the art and science of architecture on more advanced lines. He had for some time left Bockhampton as a permanent resident, living, except at week-ends, in Dorchester, either with Hicks or at lodgings; though he often sojourned at Bockhampton later on.

The Great Exhibition of that year was about to be opened, and this perhaps influenced him in the choice of a date for his migration. His only previous journey to the capital had been made with his mother in 1848 or 1849, when they passed through it on the way to and back from Hertfordshire, on a visit to a relative, as mentioned earlier. With prudent forethought he bought a return ticket for the journey, so that he might be able to travel back to Dorchester did he reach the end of his resources. After six months he threw away the unused half.

Hardy used to relate humorously that on the afternoon of his arrival he called to inquire for lodgings at a house where was employed a bachelor some ten years older than himself, whose cousin Hardy had known. This acquaintance, looking him up and down, was sceptical about his establishing himself in London. "Wait till you have walked the streets a few weeks", he said satirically, "and your elbows begin to shine, and the hems of your trousers



Thomas Hardy, aged 21
1861

get frayed, as if nibbled by rats! Only practical men are wanted here." Hardy began to wish he had thought less of the Greek Testament and more of iron girders.

However, he had at least two letters of introduction in his pocket—one from a gushing lady to Mr. Benjamin Ferrey, F.R.I.B.A., of Trinity Place, Charing Cross, an architect who had been a pupil of the elder Pugin's, was connected with the west of England, and had designed a Dorset mansion of which Hardy's father had been one of the builders, carrying out the work to that gentleman's complete satisfaction. But, as usually happens, this sheet-anchor was less trustworthy than had been expected. Mr. Ferrey was civil to the young man, remembered his father, promised every assistance; and there the matter ended.

The other introduction was to Mr. John Norton of Old Bond Street, also an architect in full practice. Mr. Norton was a Bristol man, a pupil of Ferrey's, and a friend of Hicks of Dorchester, by reason, it is believed, of their joint association with Bristol. Anyhow, Norton received young Thomas Hardy with great kindness, and, his friendship coming at the nick of time when it was needed, he proved himself one of the best helps Hardy ever had. The generous architect told him that he must on no account be doing nothing in London (Hardy looked quite a pink-faced youth even now), and arranged that he should come daily and make drawings in his office for a merely nominal remuneration whilst looking further about town. As Mr. Norton was in no real need of assistance the proposal was most considerate of him.

LAST WEEK IN APRIL 1862

Here was indeed as good a thing as could have happened. It was an anchorage, and Hardy never forgot it. Strangely enough, on his arriving on the following Monday to begin, Mr. Norton informed him that a friend

whom he had met at the Institute of British Architects had asked him if he knew of a young Gothic draughtsman who could restore and design churches and rectory-houses. He had strongly recommended Hardy, and packed him off at once to call on Mr. Arthur Blomfield, the friend in question.

Blomfield was a son of the recently deceased Dr. Blomfield, Bishop of London; a Rugbeian, a graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, where he had been a great boating man; and a well-known church-designer and restorer, whose architectural pupillage had been under Philip C. Hardwicke. Hardy found him in, a lithe, brisk man of thirty-three, with whom Hardy was to keep up a friendship for near on forty years. Arrangements were made, and on the following Monday, May 5, he began work as an assistant-architect in Mr. Blomfield's drawing-office—at that time at 8 St. Martin's Place, in rooms also used by the Alpine Club. This was another linking coincidence with aftertimes, for Leslie Stephen, an ardent climber and a member of the Club, was a visitor to these rooms, though ten years were to elapse before Hardy got to know him, and to be mentally influenced by him so deeply. In the following autumn or winter, however, more commodious and lighter drawing-offices were taken at 8 Adelphi Terrace, first floor; which Blomfield continued to occupy during the remaining five years that Hardy worked with him. Shortly after his entry there Hardy had an experience which might have been serious:

"March 10. Went into the streets in the evening to see the illuminations on the occasion of the P. of Wales's marriage. By the fortunate accident of beginning my walk at the city end of the route I had left the neighbourhood of the Mansion House before the great mass of people got there, but I had enough to do to hold my own at the bottom of Bond Street, where my waistcoat buttons were torn off and my ribs bent in before I could get into a doorway. Molsey and Paris [two pupils of Ferrey's, friends of

Hardy's] were in the Mansion House crush, having started from the West End, like most of the spectators. Six people were killed close to them, and they did not expect to get out alive."

In a letter written many years after to an inquirer who was interested in his association with Adelphi Terrace, Hardy states:

"I sat there drawing, inside the easternmost window of the front room on the first floor above the ground floor, occasionally varying the experience by idling on the balcony. I saw from there the Embankment and Charing-Cross Bridge built, and of course used to think of Garrick and Johnson. The rooms contained at that date fine Adam mantelpieces in white marble, on which we used to sketch caricatures in pencil."

It may be added that the ground-floor rooms of this 8 Adelphi Terrace were occupied by the Reform League during Hardy's stay overhead, and that Swinburne in one of his letters speaks of a correspondence with the League about this date. "The Reform League," he says, "a body of extreme reformers not now extant I believe, but of some note and power for a time, solicited me to sit in Parliament—as representative of more advanced democratic or republican opinions than were represented there." Swinburne consulted Mazzini, who dissuaded him from consenting. The heads of the League were familiar personages to Blomfield's pupils who, as became Tory and Churchy young men, indulged in satire at the League's expense, letting down ironical bits of paper on the heads of members, and once coming nearly to loggerheads with the worthy resident secretary, Mr. George Howell—to whom they had to apologize for their exasperating conduct—all this being unknown to Mr. Blomfield himself.

The following letters were written to his sister, Miss Mary Hardy, during 1862 and 1863, the first year that Hardy was at St. Martin's Place and Adelphi Terrace.

KILBURN, 17 *August* 1862.

9. P.M.

MY DEAR MARY

"After the fire a still small voice"—I have just come from the evening service at St. Mary's Kilburn and this verse, which I always notice, was in the 1st Lesson.

This Ch. of St. Mary is rather to my taste and they sing most of the tunes in the Salisbury hymn book there.

H. M. M. was up the week before last. We went to a Roman Catholic Chapel on the Thursday evening. It was a very impressive service. The Chapel was built by Pugin. Afterwards we took a cab to the old Hummums, an hotel near Covent Garden where we had supper. He may come and settle permanently in London in a few months, but is not certain yet.

E—— was up last week. I had half a day at the Exhibition with him. He is now living at home, looking out for a situation. I do not think he will get into anything yet.

I have not been to a theatre since you were here. I generally run down to the Exhibition for an hour in the evening two or three times a week; after I come out I go to the reading room of the Kensington Museum.

It has been pouring with rain all the day and last night, such a disappointment for thousands of Londoners, whose only holiday is Sunday.

I should like to have a look at the old Cathedral, etc., in about a month or so. The autumn seems the proper season for seeing Salisbury. Do you ever go to St. Thomas's? Be careful about getting cold again and do not go out in evenings.

P. S. is reading extracts from Ruskin's "Modern Painters" to me which accounts for the wretched composition of this epistle as I am obliged to make comments etc. on what he reads.

Ever yours,
T. H.

KILBURN, 19th February.

MY DEAR MARY:

I don't fancy that 'tis so very long since I wrote and the Saturdays [*Saturday Reviews*] have been sent regularly but I really intended to write this week.

You see that we have moved, so for the future my address will be as on the other side. We have not recovered from the confusion yet, and our drawings and papers are nohow.

The new office is a capital place. It is on the first floor and on a terrace that overlooks the river. We can see from our window right across the Thames, and on a clear day every bridge is visible. Everybody says that we have a beautiful place.

To-day has been wretched. It was almost pitch dark in the middle of the day, and everything visible appeared of the colour of brown paper or pea-soup.

There is a great deal of preparation for the approaching wedding. The Princess is to arrive on the 7th March and the wedding will be on the 10th. On her landing at Gravesend she will be received by the Prince, the Mayor, Mayoress, etc. They will then go by train to the Bricklayers' Arms station, and then in procession over London Bridge, along Fleet Street, Strand, Charing Cross, Pall Mall, Piccadilly, through Hyde Park, and up the Edgware Road to Paddington Station—thence to Windsor. The windows along the route are full of notices that seats to view the procession are to be let. There will be an illumination the evening of the 10th.

I went to Richmond yesterday to see Lee. He is better but is going to Kent for a short time before coming back to the office.

I have not heard anything about the Essay yet. The name of the successful competitor will be known in about a fortnight. I am now very busy getting up a design for a country mansion for which a small prize is offered—£3

the best and £2 the second best. It has to be sent in by the 27th March.

I am glad you have got a drawing prize, but you don't say what. I think you have done very well altogether. Tell me about the organ and how the Sundays go off—I am uncommonly interested. How is your friend the blind man etc., School, clergyman etc. *Say how you are*, don't forget. I am quite well. Horace Moule has been ill. So has H. A. as I daresay you know. Has she written yet? I sent a valentine to Harry and Kate to please them. Harry wrote me a letter, and Kate printed one and sent—rather a curiosity in its way.

I sent Mrs. Rolls photographs and she sent me a paper and letter. She says that Parsons is postmaster in place of Lock who has resigned.

I tried the Underground Railway one day—Everything is excellently arranged.

Do you think to run up Easter? If so, you must not mind being left alone all day—but you know your way about.

T. S. has commenced the sketch of our house for you. He says it will soon be finished.

Is Katie coming up to live with you and when is Mother coming?

Ever your affectionate
TOM.

8 ADELPHI TERRACE,
19 Dec. 1863.

MY DEAR MARY,

I was beginning to think you had given up writing altogether, when your letter came. Certainly try to get as long a time as you can Christmas.

I am glad you have been to Oxford again. It must be a jolly place. I shall try to get down there some time or other. You have no right to say you are not connected

with art. Everybody is to a certain extent ; the only difference between a professor and an amateur being that the former has the (often disagreeable) necessity of making it his means of earning bread and cheese—and thus often rendering what is a pleasure to other people a “bore” to himself.

About Thackeray. You must read something of his. He is considered to be the greatest novelist of the day—looking at novel writing of the highest kind as a perfect and truthful representation of actual life—which is no doubt the proper view to take. Hence, because his novels stand so high as works of Art or Truth, they often have anything but an elevating tendency, and on that account are particularly unfitted for young people—from their very truthfulness. People say that it is beyond Mr. Thackeray to paint a perfect man or woman—a great fault if novels are intended to instruct, but just the opposite if they are to be considered merely as Pictures. *Vanity Fair* is considered one of his best.

I expect to go home about Tuesday or Wednesday after Xmas and then shall find you there of course—We must have a “bit of a lark”.

Ever affectionately
TOM.

I am able to write 40 words a minute. The average rate of a speaker is from 100, to 120 and occasionally 140 ; so I have much more to do yet.

During the first few months of Hardy's life in London he had not forgotten to pay a call on the lady of his earliest passion as a child, who had been so tender towards him in those days, and had used to take him in her arms. She and her husband were now living in Bruton Street. The butler who opened the door was, he recalled, the same one who had been with the family at Kingston-Maurward all those years ago, and looked little altered. But the lady of

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received 21

his dreams—alas! To her, too, the meeting must have been no less painful than pleasant: she was plainly embarrassed at having in her presence a young man of over twenty-one, who was very much of a handful in comparison with the rosy-cheeked, innocent little boy she had almost expected “Tommy” to remain. One interview was not quite sufficient to wear off the stiffness resulting from such changed conditions, though, warming up, she asked him to come again. But getting immersed in London life, he did not respond to her invitation, showing that the fickleness was his alone. But they occasionally corresponded, as will be seen.

* { It may be hardly necessary to record, since he somewhere describes it himself, that the metropolis into which he had plunged at this date differed greatly from the London of even a short time after. It was the London of Dickens and Thackeray, and Evans’s supper-rooms were still in existence in an underground hall in Covent Garden, which Hardy once at least visited. The Cider Cellars and the Coal Hole were still flourishing, with “Judge and Jury” mock trials, “Baron Nicholson” or his successor being judge. And Dr. Donovan the phrenologist gauged heads in the Strand, informing Hardy that his would lead him to no good.

The ladies talked about by the architects’ pupils and other young men into whose society Hardy was thrown were Cora Pearl, “Skittles”, Agnes Willoughby, Adah Isaacs Menken, and others successively, of whom they professed to know many romantic and *risqué* details but really knew nothing at all; another of their romantic interests that Hardy recalled being, a little later, the legend of the moorhen dive of Lady Florence Paget into Marshall & Snelgrove’s shop away from Mr. Chaplin, her *fiancé*, and her emergence at the other door into the arms of Lord Hastings, and marriage with him—a sensational piece of news with which they came in breathless the week it happened.

Hungerford Market was still in being where the Charing Cross Station now stands, and Hardy occasionally lunched at a "Coffee house" there. He also lunched or dined at Bertolini's with some pupils of Ferrey's, the architect who had known his father and been the pupil of Pugin. This restaurant in St. Martin's Street, Leicester Square, called Newton House, had been the residence and observatory of Sir Isaac Newton, and later the home of the Burneys, who were visited there by Johnson, Reynolds, etc., and the stone floors were still sanded as in former days. A few years after Hardy frequented it Swinburne used to dine there as a member of the "Cannibal Club". Tennyson is also stated to have often dined at Bertolini's. To Hardy's great regret this building of many associations was pulled down in later years.

On his way to Adelphi Terrace he used to take some short cut near Seven Dials, passing daily the liquor saloons of Alec Keene and Tom King (?) in West Street (now demolished), and Nat Langham at the top of St. Martin's Lane, when he could sometimes discern the forms of those famous prize-fighters behind their respective bars.

There was no Thames Embankment. Temple Bar still stood in its place, and the huge block of buildings known as the Law Courts was not erected. Holborn Hill was still a steep and noisy thoroughfare which almost broke the legs of the slipping horses, and Skinner Street ran close by, with presumably Godwin's house yet standing in it, at which Shelley first set eyes on Mary. No bridge across Ludgate Hill disfigured St. Paul's and the whole neighbourhood. The South Kensington Museum was housed in iron sheds nicknamed the "Brompton Boilers", which Hardy used to frequent this year to obtain materials for an Essay he sent in to the Royal Institute of British Architects; it was awarded the prize in the following spring. The Underground Railway was just in its infancy, and omnibus conductors leaving "Kilburn Gate", near which Hardy

lived awhile, cried, "Any more passengers for London?" The list of such changes might be infinitely extended.

Charles Kean and his wife were still performing Shakespeare at the Princess's Theatre, and Buckstone was at the Haymarket in the new play of *The American Cousin*, in which he played the name-part. At most of the theatres about nine o'clock there was a noise of trampling feet, and the audience whispered, "Half-price coming in". The play paused for a few moments, and when all was quiet went on again.

Balls were constant at Willis's Rooms, earlier Almack's, and in 1862 Hardy danced at these rooms, or at Almack's as he preferred to call the place, realizing its historic character. He used to recount that in those old days, the pretty Lancers and Caledonians were still footed there to the original charming tunes, which brought out the beauty of the figures as no later tunes did, and every movement was a correct quadrille step and gesture. For those dances had not at that date degenerated to a waltzing step, to be followed by galloping romps to uproarious pieces.

Cremorne and the Argyle he also sought, remembering the jaunty senior-pupil at Hicks's who had used to haunt those gallant resorts. But he did not dance there much himself, if at all, and the fascinating quadrille-tune has vanished like a ghost, though he went one day to second-hand music shops, and also to the British Museum, and hunted over a lot of such music in a search for it. Allusions to these experiences occur in more than one of his poems, "Reminiscences of a Dancing Man" in particular; and they were largely drawn upon, so he once remarked, in the destroyed novel *The Poor Man and the Lady*—of which later on.

In a corresponding fit of musical enthusiasm he also bought an old fiddle at this time, with which he practised at his lodgings, with another man there who performed

on the piano, pieces from the romantic Italian operas of Covent Garden and Her Majesty's, the latter being then also an opera house, which places they used to frequent two or three times a week ; not, except on rare occasions, in the best parts of the houses, as will be well imagined, but in the half-crown amphitheatre.

The foreign operas in vogue were those of Rossini, Donizetti, Verdi, Meyerbeer, Bellini : and thus Hardy became familiar with such singers as Mario (Grise had just departed), Tietjens, Nilsson, Patti (just come), Giuglini, Parepa, and others of the date. An English Opera Company was also in existence, and Hardy patriotically supported it by going often to operas by Balfe, Wallace, and others. Here he had the painful experience of hearing the gradual breakdown of the once fine voice of William Harrison, who, with Miss Louisa Pyne, had established the company and endeavoured to keep such opera going. Hardy was heard to assert that, as it were in defiance of fate, Harrison would sing night after night his favourite songs, such as "Let me like a soldier fall" in *Maritana*, and, particularly, "When other lips" in *The Bohemian Girl*, wherein his complete failure towards the last attempts would move a sensitive listener to tears : he thought Harrison's courage in struggling on, hoping against hope, might probably cause him to be remembered longer than his greatest success.

AT BLOMFIELD'S

Mr. Blomfield (afterwards Sir Arthur) being the son of a late Bishop of London, was considered a right and proper man for supervising the removal of human bodies in cases where railways had obtained a faculty for making cuttings through the city churchyards, so that it should be done decently and in order. A case occurred in which this function on the Bishop's behalf was considered to be duly carried out. But afterwards Mr. Blomfield came to Hardy and informed him with a look of concern that he had just

returned from visiting the site on which all the removed bodies were said by the company to be reinterred; but there appeared to be nothing deposited, the surface of the ground lying quite level as before. Also that there were rumours of mysterious full bags of something that rattled, and cartage to bone-mills. He much feared that he had not exercised a sufficiently sharp supervision, and that the railway company had got over him somehow. "I believe these people are all ground up!" said Blomfield grimly.

Soon there was to occur a similar proceeding on a much larger scale by another company; the carrying of a cutting by the Midland Railway through Old St. Pancras Churchyard, which would necessitate the removal of many hundreds of coffins, and bones in huge quantities. In this business Mr. Blomfield was to represent the Bishop as before. The architect said that now there should be no mistake about his thoroughly carrying out the superintendence. Accordingly, he set a clerk-of-works in the churchyard, who was never to leave during working hours; and as the removals were effected by night, and the clerk-of-works might be lax or late, he deputed Hardy to go on evenings at uncertain hours, to see that the clerk-of-works was performing his duties; while Hardy's chief himself was to drop in at unexpected moments during the week, presumably to see that neither his assistant nor the clerk-of-works was a defaulter.

The plan succeeded excellently, and throughout the late autumn and early winter (of probably the year 1865 or thereabouts) Hardy attended at the churchyard—each evening between five and six, as well as sometimes at other hours. There after nightfall, within a high hoarding that could not be overlooked, and by the light of flare-lamps, the exhumation went on continuously of the coffins that had been uncovered during the day, new coffins being provided for those that came apart in lifting, and for loose

skeletons; and those that held together being carried to the new ground on a board merely; Hardy supervising these mournful processions when present, with what thoughts may be imagined, and Blomfield sometimes meeting him there. In one coffin that fell apart was a skeleton and two skulls. He used to tell that when, after some fifteen years of separation, he met Arthur Blomfield again and their friendship was fully renewed, among the latter's first words were: "Do you remember how we found the man with two heads at St. Pancras?"

It may conceivably have been some rumour of the possibility of this lamentable upheaval of Old St. Pancras Churchyard by the railway company in the near future which had led Sir Percy, the son of Mary Shelley, to remove the bodies of her parents therefrom to St. Peter's, Bournemouth, where she had been buried in 1851, and where they now lie beside her, though few people seem to know that such an illustrious group is in the churchyard.

Hardy used to tell some amusing stories of his chief, a genuine humorist like his father the bishop. Among other strange ways in which he and his pupils, including Hardy, used to get on with their architecture was by singing glees and catches at intervals during office hours. Having always been musically inclined and, as has been stated, a fiddler of countless jigs and reels in his boyhood, Hardy could sing at sight with moderate accuracy from notation, though his voice was not strong. Hence Blomfield welcomed him in the office choir, where he himself took the bass, the rest waiting till he had "got his low E". Hardy also, at Blomfield's request, sang in the church-choir at the opening of the organ at St. Matthias' Church, Richmond, where Blomfield took a bass part, one of his pupils being organist. But in the office the alto part was the difficulty, and Blomfield would say: "If you meet an alto anywhere in the Strand, Hardy, ask him to come in and join us."

Among other things, the architect related that one day before he (Hardy) came, a Punch-and-Judy show performed outside the office in St. Martin's Place. Presently the housekeeper, a woman London-bred, came running upstairs exclaiming, "Why, Mr. Arthur, I declare there's a man inside! And I never knew it before!"

On an occasion when a builder had called on business, Hardy being present and some pupils, Blomfield airily said to the builder: "Well, Mr. T——, what can I do for you? What will you take this morning—sherry or port?" Though it was only between 10 and 11 Mr. T—— reflected earnestly and said, "Port, sir, if you please." As they naturally had no wine or any other liquor at the offices, Blomfield was comically disconcerted at the worthy builder's seriousness, but was as good as his word, and the office-boy was secretly dispatched to the Strand to buy a bottle of port, and to the housekeeper to borrow a glass.

Grotesque incidents that seldom happened to other people seemed to happen to Blomfield. One day he and Hardy went together to some slum near Soho to survey the site for a new building. The inspection made their boots muddy, and on the way back Blomfield suggested they should have them cleaned, as two bootblacks had come up pointing significantly. When Hardy and he had placed themselves Blomfield asked the second why he did not proceed with his brushing, like the first. "'Cause he's got no blacking nor brush", said the first. "What good is he then?" asked Blomfield. "I've cracked my blacking-bottle, and it goes dry; so I pay him a penny a day to spit for me."

However, matters were graver sometimes. Hardy remembered how one morning he arrived at the Terrace to find Blomfield standing with his back to the fireplace, and with a very anxious face. The architect said slowly without any preface, "Hardy, that tower has fallen."

His eyes were fixed on the opposite wall where was the drawing of a new church just then finished. It was a serious matter, especially as some years earlier another well-known architect had been sentenced to a year's imprisonment for manslaughter, one of his new erections having fallen and killed some people. Fortunately no one was killed in the present case, and the designer was quite exonerated by having the tower rebuilt stone by stone as it had been before, and so proving the construction to be unimpeachable, for there it has stood ever since without a crack. What had caused the fall was always a mystery.

This used to remind Hardy of another church-tower story. Mr. Hicks, with whom he served his pupillage, once told him that at the beginning of his practice he built a church-tower near Bristol, and on a night just after its erection he dreamt that on approaching it he saw a huge crack in its west wall from the parapet downwards. He was so disturbed that next morning he mounted his horse; it was before railways, and architects often then rode on horseback to the supervision of their buildings; and trotting off to the village the tower rose into his view. There was the crack in its face exactly as he had beheld it in his dream.

Having somewhat settled down with Blomfield, but feeling that architectural drawing in which the actual designing had no great part was monotonous and mechanical; having besides little inclination for pushing his way into influential sets which would help him to start a practice of his own, Hardy's tastes reverted to the literary pursuits that he had been compelled to abandon in 1861, and had not resumed except to write the Prize Architectural Essay beforementioned. By as early as the end of 1863 he had recommenced to read a great deal, with a growing tendency towards poetry. But he was forced to consider ways and means, and it was suggested to him that he might combine

literature with architecture by becoming an art-critic for the press, particularly in the province of architectural art. It is probable that he might easily have carried this out, reviewers with a speciality being then, and possibly now, in demand. His preparations for such a course were, however, quickly abandoned, and by 1865 he had begun to write verses, and by 1866 to send his productions to magazines. That these were rejected by editors, and that he paid such respect to their judgment as scarcely ever to send out a MS. twice, was in one feature fortunate for him, since in years long after he was able to examine those poems of which he kept copies, and by the mere change of a few words or the rewriting of a line or two to make them quite worthy of publication. Such of them as are dated in these years were all written in his lodgings at 16 Westbourne Park Villas. He also began turning the Book of Ecclesiastes into Spenserian stanzas, but finding the original unmatchable abandoned the task.

As another outcome of the same drift of mind, he used to deliver short addresses or talks on poets and poetry to Blomfield's pupils and assistants on afternoons when there was not much to be done, or at all events when not much was done. There is no tradition of what Blomfield thought of this method of passing office hours instead of making architectural plans.

The only thing he got published at the time was, so far as is known, a trifle in *Chambers's Journal* in 1865 entitled "How I built myself a house", written to amuse the pupils of Blomfield. It may have been the acceptance of this *jeu d'esprit* that turned his mind in the direction of prose; yet he made such notes as the following:

"April, 1865. The form on the canvas which immortalizes the painter is but the last of a series of tentative and abandoned sketches each of which contained some particular feature nearer perfection than any part of the finished product."

"Public opinion is of the nature of a woman."

"There is not that regular gradation among woman-kind that there is among men. You may meet with 999 exactly alike and then the thousandth—not a little better, but far above them. Practically therefore it is useless for a man to seek after this thousandth to make her his." *

"*May*. How often we see a vital truth flung about carelessly wrapt in a commonplace subject, without the slightest conception on the speaker's part that his words contain an unsmelted treasure."

"In architecture, men who are clever in details are bunglers in generalities. So it is in everything whatsoever."

"More conducive to success in life than the desire for much knowledge is the being satisfied with ignorance on irrelevant subjects."

"The world does not despise us; it only neglects us."

Whether or no, he did not seriously take up prose till two or three years later, when he was practically compelled to try his hand on it by finding himself perilously near coming to the ground between the two stools of architecture and literature.

Subsequent historic events brought back to his mind that this year he went with Blomfield to New Windsor, to the laying of the Memorial-stone of a church there by the Crown Princess of Germany (the English Princess Royal). She was accompanied by her husband the Crown Prince, afterwards the Emperor Frederick. "Blomfield handed her the trowel, and during the ceremony she got her glove daubed with the mortar. In her distress she handed the trowel back to him with an impatient whisper of 'Take it, take it!'"

Here is another note of his relating to this time:

"*July 2 (1865)*. Worked at J. H. Newman's *Apologia*, which we have all been talking about lately. A great desire

to be convinced by him, because Moule likes him so much. Style charming, and his logic really human, being based not on syllogisms but on converging probabilities. Only—and here comes the fatal catastrophe—there is no first link to his excellent chain of reasoning, and down you come headlong. . . . Read some Horace; also *Childe Harold* and *Lalla Rookh* till $\frac{1}{2}$ past 12.”

However, as yet he did not by any means abandon verse, which he wrote constantly, but kept private, through the years 1866 and most of 1867, resolving to send no more to magazines whose editors probably did not know good poetry from bad, and forming meanwhile the quixotic opinion that, as in verse was concentrated the essence of all imaginative and emotional literature, to read verse and nothing else was the shortest way to the fountain-head of such, for one who had not a great deal of spare time. And in fact for nearly or quite two years he did not read a word of prose except such as came under his eye in the daily newspapers and weekly reviews. Thus his reading naturally covered a fairly large tract of English poetry, and it may be mentioned, as showing that he had some views of his own, that he preferred Scott the poet to Scott the novelist, and never ceased to regret that the author of “the most Homeric poem in the English language—*Marmion*”—should later have declined on prose fiction.

He was not so keenly anxious to get into print as many young men are; in this indifference, as in some qualities of his verse, curiously resembling Donne. The Horatian exhortation that he had come across in his reading—to keep his own compositions back till the ninth year—had made a deep impression on him. *Nescit vox missa reverti*; and by retaining his poems, and destroying those he thought irremediably bad—though he afterwards fancied he had destroyed too many—he may have been saved from the annoyance of seeing his early crude effusions crop up in later life.

At the same time there can be no doubt that some closer association with living poets and the poetry of the moment would have afforded Hardy considerable stimulus and help. But his unfortunate shyness—or rather aloofness, for he was not shy in the ordinary sense—served him badly at this period of his life. During part of his residence at Westbourne Park Villas he was living within half a mile of Swinburne, and hardly more than a stone's throw from Browning, to whom introductions would not have been difficult through literary friends of Blomfield's. He might have obtained at least encouragement from these, and, if he had cared, possibly have floated off some of his poems in a small volume. But such a proceeding as trying to know these contemporaries seems never to have crossed his mind.

During his residence in London he had entered himself at King's College for the French classes, where he studied the tongue through a term or two under Professor Stièvenard, never having taken it up seriously since in his boyhood he had worked at exercises under a governess. He used to say that Stièvenard was the most charming Frenchman he ever met, as well as being a fine teacher. Hardy's mind had, however, become at this date so deeply immersed in the practice and study of English poetry that he gave but a perfunctory attention to his French readings.

"March 11. The woman at a first interview will know as much of the man as he will know of her on the wedding morning; whilst she will know as little of him then as he knew of her when they first shook hands. Her knowledge will have come upon her like a flood, and have as gradually soaked away."

"June 2. My 25th birthday. Not very cheerful. Feel as if I had lived a long time and done very little.

"Walked about by moonlight in the evening. Wondered what woman, if any, I should be thinking about in five years' time."

"*July 9.* The greatest and most majestic being on the face of the earth will accept pleasure from the most insignificant."

"*July 19.* Patience is the union of moral courage with physical cowardice."

"*End of July.* The dull period in the life of an event is when it ceases to be news and has not begun to be history."

"*August.* The anguish of a defeat is most severely felt when we look upon weak ones who have believed us invincible and have made preparations for our victory."

"*Aug. 23.* The poetry of a scene varies with the minds of the perceivers. Indeed, it does not lie in the scene at all."

About this time Hardy nourished a scheme of a highly visionary character. He perceived from the impossibility of getting his verses accepted by magazines that he could not live by poetry, and (rather strangely) thought that architecture and poetry—particularly architecture in London—would not work well together. So he formed the idea of combining poetry and the Church—towards which he had long had a leaning—and wrote to a friend in Cambridge for particulars as to matriculation at that University, which with his late classical reading would have been easy for him. He knew that what money he could not muster himself for keeping terms his father would lend him for a few years, his idea being that of a curacy in a country village. This fell through less because of its difficulty than from a conscientious feeling, after some theological study, that he could hardly take the step with honour while holding the views which on examination he found himself to hold. And so he allowed the curious scheme to drift out of sight, though not till after he had begun to practice orthodoxy. For example:

"*July 5.* Sunday. To Westminster Abbey morning service. Stayed at the Sacrament. A very odd experience, amid a crowd of strangers."

Among other incidents of his life in London during these years was also one that he used to recall with interest, when writing *The Dynasts*—his hearing Palmerston speak in the House of Commons a short time before his death, Palmerston having been War Secretary during the decisive hostilities with Napoleon embodied in the Third Part of Hardy's Epic-Drama, a personal conjunction which brought its writer face to face not only with actual participants in the great struggle—as was the case with his numerous acquaintance of rank-and-file who had fought in the Peninsula and at Waterloo—but with one who had contributed to direct the affairs of that war. The only note on the fact that can be found is the following:

"Oct. 18 [1865]. Wet evening. At Regent Circus, coming home saw the announcement of the death of Ld. Palmerston, whom I heard speak in the House of Commons a year or two ago."

"Oct. 27. To Westminster Abbey with Mr. Heaton and Lee. Took up a position in the triforium, from which spot I saw Ld. Palmerston lowered into the grave. Purcell's service. Dead March in Saul."

The following letter to his sister describes the ceremony.

Saturday, Oct. 28. 1865.

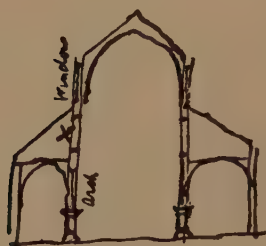
MY DEAR MARY

I sent *Barchester Towers* by B. P., and you are probably by this time acquainted with Eleanor Bold, etc. This novel is considered the best of Trollope's.

Yesterday Lord Palmerston was buried—the Prime Minister. I and the Lees got tickets through a friend of a friend of Mr. B's, and we went of course. Our tickets admitted to the triforium, or monks' walk, of Westminster Abbey, and we got from there a complete view of the ceremony. You will know wh. part of the Abbey I mean if you think of Salisbury Cathedral and of the row of

small arches over the large arches, wh. throw open the space between the roof of the aisles and the vaulting.

Where I have put the $\times$ in the Section is where I stood; over the $\otimes$ on the Plan. The mark $\#$ shows where the grave is, between Pitt's and Fox's and close by Canning's. All the Cabinet Ministers were there as pall bearers. The burial service was Purcell's. The opening sentences "I am the resurrection, etc" were sung to Croft's music. Beethoven's Funeral March was played as they went from the choir to the vault, and the Dead March



Section



Plan.

in Saul was played at the close. I think I was never so much impressed with a ceremony in my life before, and I wd. not have missed it for anything. The Prince of Wales and Duke of Cambridge were present.

Ld. John Russell, or Earl Russell as he is now, is to be Prime Minister in Pam's place. Only fancy, Ld. P. has been connected with the govt. off and on for the last 60 years, and that he was contemporaneous with Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Burke, etc. I mean to say his life overlapped theirs so to speak. I sent father a newspaper containing an account of his life, and today one with an account of the funeral. As you are not a politician I didn't send you one, but these things interest him.

If you can get *Pelham*, read it when you want something. Do not hurry over Barchester, for I have enough to do. I think Wells is the place intended. Will it be a

good thing or will it be awkward for you if H. A. and I come down for Xmas day and the next?

I am rather glad that hot close weather is gone and the bracing air come again. I think I told you I had joined the French class at King's College.

Ever sincerely.

T. H.

A tall man went to see Chang the Chinese Giant, and on his offering to pay, the doorkeeper said "Not at all Sir, we don't take money from the *profession!*" at least so *Punch* says.

Through this winter the following note continually occurs: "Read some more Horace."

His interest in painting led him to devote for many months, on every day that the National Gallery was open, twenty minutes after lunch to an inspection of the masters hung there, confining his attention to a single master on each visit, and forbidding his eyes to stray to any other. He went there from sheer liking, and not with any practical object; but he used to recommend the plan to young people, telling them that they would insensibly acquire a greater insight into schools and styles by this means than from any guide-books to the painters' works and manners.

During Phelps's series of Shakespeare plays at Drury Lane Hardy followed up every one, his companion being one of Blomfield's pupils. They used to carry a good edition of the play with them, and be amongst the first of the pit crowd, holding the book edgewise on the barrier in front (which in those days was close to the orchestra) during the performance—a severe enough test for the actors, if they noticed the two enthusiasts. He always said that Phelps never received his due as a Shakespearean actor—particularly as Falstaff.

He also frequented the later readings by Charles

Dickens at the Hanover Square Rooms, and oratorios at Exeter Hall.

SUMMER 1867

Adelphi Terrace, as everybody knows, faces the river, and in the heat of summer, while Hardy was there, the stench from the mud at low water increased, the Metropolitan main-drainage system not having been yet constructed. Whether from the effects of this smell upon a constitution that had grown up in a pure country atmosphere (as he himself supposed), or because he had been accustomed to shut himself up in his rooms at Westbourne Park Villas every evening from six to twelve, reading incessantly, instead of getting out for air after the day's confinement, Hardy's health had become much weakened. He used to say that on sitting down to begin drawing in the morning he had scarcely physical power left him to hold the pencil and square. When he visited his friends in Dorset they were shocked at the pallor which sheeted a countenance formerly ruddy with health. His languor increased month by month. Blomfield, who must have been inconvenienced by it, suggested to Hardy that he should go into the country for a time to regain vigour. Hardy was beginning to feel that he would rather go into the country altogether. He constitutionally shrank from the business of social advancement, caring for life as an emotion rather than for life as a science of climbing, in which respect he was quizzed by his acquaintance for his lack of ambition. However, Blomfield thought that to stay permanently in the country would be a mistake, advising him to return to London by the following October at latest.

An opportunity of trying the experiment, at any rate, was afforded by the arrival of a communication from Mr. Hicks, his old instructor in architecture, asking if he could recommend him any good assistant accustomed to church-restoration, as he was hampered by frequently suffering

from gout. Hardy wrote that he would go himself, and at the latter part of July (1867) went down to Dorchester, leaving most of his books and other belongings behind him at Westbourne Park, which included such of his poems in manuscript as he had thought worth keeping. Of these the only ones not ultimately destroyed were consigned to darkness till between thirty and forty years after, when they were printed—mainly in *Wessex Poems*, though several, that had been overlooked at first, appeared in later volumes. Among the earliest were "Amabel", "Hap", "In Vision I Roamed", "At a Bridal", "Postponement", "A Confession to a Friend", "Neutral Tones", "Her Dilemma", "Revulsion", "Her Reproach", "The Ruined Maid", "Heiress and Architect", and four sonnets called "She to Him" (part of a much larger number which perished). Some had been sent to magazines, one sonnet that he rather liked, which began, "Many a one has loved as much as I" having been lost, the editor never returning it and Hardy having kept no copy. But most had never been sent anywhere.

It should be mentioned that several months before leaving London he had formed an idea of writing plays in blank verse—and had planned to try the stage as a supernumerary for six or twelve months, to acquire technical skill in their construction—going so far as to make use of an introduction to Mark Lemon, the then editor of *Punch*, and an ardent amateur-actor, for his opinion on this point. Nothing, however, came of the idea beyond the call on the genial editor, and on Mr. Coe, the stage-manager at the Haymarket under Buckstone's lesseeship, with whom he had a conversation. The former rather damped the young man's ardour by reminding him that the elder Mathews had said that he would not let a dog of his go on the stage, and that he himself, much as he personally liked the art of acting, would rather see a daughter of his in her grave than on the boards of a theatre. In fact almost the first moment

of his sight of stage realities disinclined him to push further in that direction; and his only actual contact with the stage at this time was his appearance at Covent Garden as a nondescript in the pantomime of "The Forty Thieves", and in a representation of the Oxford and Cambridge boat-race—this having come about through the accident of the smith who did the ironwork for the pantomime being the man who executed some of Blomfield's designs for church metal-work, and who made crucifixes and harlequin-traps with equal imperturbability. More than forty years were to elapse before Hardy trod the same boards again—this time at rehearsals of the Italian Opera by Baron Frederic d'Erlanger, founded on *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*.

"*End of Dec. 1865.* To insects the twelvemonth has been an epoch, to leaves a life, to tweeting birds a generation, to man a year."

NOTES OF 1866-67

"A certain man: He creeps away to a meeting with his own sensations."

"He feels himself shrink into nothing when contemplating other people's *means* of working. When he looks upon their *ends* he expands with triumph."

"There is no more painful lesson to be learnt by a man of capacious mind than that of excluding general knowledge for particular."

"The defects of a class are more perceptible to the class immediately below it than to itself."

"*June 6.* Went to Hatfield. Changed since my early visit. A youth thought the altered highway had always run as it did. Pied rabbits in the Park, descendants of those I knew. The once children are quite old inhabitants. I regretted that the beautiful sunset did not occur in a place

of no reminiscences, that I might have enjoyed it without their tinge."

"*June* 19. A widely appreciative mind mostly fails to achieve a great work from pure far-sightedness. The very clearness with which he discerns remote possibilities is, from its nature, scarcely ever co-existent with the microscopic vision demanded for tracing the narrow path that leads to them."

"*July* 13. A man's grief has a touch of the ludicrous unless it is so keen as to be awful."

"*Feb.* 18. Remember that Evil dies as well as Good."

"*April* 29. Had the teachings of experience grown cumulatively with the age of the world we should have been ere now as great as God."

CHAPTER IV

BETWEEN ARCHITECTURE AND LITERATURE

1867-1870: *Aet.* 27-30

END OF SUMMER 1867

A FEW weeks in the country—where he returned to his former custom of walking to the Dorchester architect's office from his mother's house every day—completely restored him. He easily fell into the routine that he had followed before, though, with between five and six years superadded of experience as a young man at large in London, it was with very different ideas of things.

Among the churches for restoration or rebuilding that Hicks had in hand, or in prospect, was one which should be named here—that of the parish of St. Juliot in Cornwall—for which remote spot Mr. Hicks set out one day to report upon the said building, shortly after Hardy had gone back to help him. Hardy noticed the romantic name of the church and parish—but had no idea of the meaning it would have for him in aftertime.

An effect among others of his return to the country was to take him out of the fitful yet mechanical and monotonous existence that befalls many a young man in London lodgings. Almost suddenly he became more practical, and queried of himself definitely how to achieve some tangible result from his desultory yet strenuous labours at literature during the previous four years. He considered that he knew fairly well both West-country life in its less explored recesses and the life of an isolated student cast

upon the billows of London with no protection but his brains—the young man of whom it may be said more truly than perhaps of any, that “save his own soul he hath no star”. The two contrasting experiences seemed to afford him abundant materials out of which to evolve a striking socialistic novel—not that he mentally defined it as such, for the word had probably never, or scarcely ever, been heard of at that date.

So down he sat in one of the intervals of his attendances at Mr. Hicks’s drawing-office (which were not regular), and, abandoning verse as a waste of labour—though he had resumed it awhile on arriving in the country—he began the novel the title of which is here written as it was at first intended to be :

THE POOR MAN AND THE LADY

A STORY WITH NO PLOT

Containing some original verses

This, however, he plainly did not like, for it was ultimately abridged to

THE POOR MAN AND THE LADY

By the POOR MAN

And the narrative was proceeded with till, in October of this year (1867), he paid a flying visit to London to fetch his books and other impedimenta.

Thus it happened that under the stress of necessity he had set about a kind of literature in which he had hitherto taken but little interest—prose fiction ; so little indeed, that at one of the brief literary lectures, or speeches, he had occasionally delivered to Blomfield’s pupils in a spare half-hour of an afternoon, he had expressed to their astonishment an indifference to a popular novelist’s fame.

1868. JANUARY 16 AND ONWARDS

We find from an entry in a note-book that on this date he began to make a fair copy of the projected story, so that all of it must have been written out roughly during the five preceding months in the intervals of his architectural work for Hicks. In the February following a memorandum shows that he composed a lyric entitled "A Departure by Train", which has disappeared. In April he was reading Browning and Thackeray; also taking down the exact sound of the song of the nightingale—the latter showing that he must have been living in sylvan shades at his parents', or at least sleeping there, at the time, where nightingales sang within a yard of the bedroom windows in those days, though they do not now.

On June 9 he enters, "Finished copying MS.", and on the 17th is recorded at some length the outline of a narrative poem on the Battle of the Nile. It was never finished, but it shows that the war with Napoleon was even then in his mind as material for poetry of some sort.

On July 1 he writes down—in all likelihood after a time of mental depression over his work and prospects:

"Cures for despair:

"To read Wordsworth's 'Resolution and Independence'.

" " Stuart Mill's 'Individuality' (in *Liberty*).

" " Carlyle's 'Jean Paul Richter'."

On July 17 he writes: "Perhaps I can do a volume of poems consisting of the *other side* of common emotions." What this means is not quite clear.

On July 25 he posted the MS. of *The Poor Man and the Lady* to Mr. Alexander Macmillan, and now being free of it, lent some more help to Mr. Hicks in his drawings for church-restorations, reading the Seventh Book of the *Aeneid* between whiles.

"August 12. A reply from Macmillan on the MS."

The letter was a very long and interesting one, and is printed in full in the *Letters of Alexander Macmillan*. The well-known publisher begins by stating that he had read the novel "with care, and with much interest and admiration, but feeling at the same time that it has what seem to me drawbacks fatal to its success, and what I think, judging the writer from the book itself, you would feel even more strongly, to its truthfulness and justice".

He then went into particulars of criticism. "The utter heartlessness of *all* the conversation you give in drawing-rooms and ballrooms about the working-classes has some ground of truth, I fear, and might justly be scourged as you aim at doing; but your chastisement would fall harmless from its very excess. Will's speech to the working men is full of wisdom. . . .

"Much of the writing seems to me admirable. The scene in Rotten Row is full of power and insight. . . . You see I am writing to you as a writer who seems to me, at least potentially, of considerable mark, of power and purpose. If this is your first book I think you ought to go on. May I ask if it is, and—you are not a lady, so perhaps you will forgive the question—are you young?

"I have shown your MS. to one friend, whose judgment coincides with my own."

The opinion of the friend—who was Mr. John Morley—was enclosed. He said that the book was "A very curious and original performance: the opening pictures of the Christmas-eve in the tranter's house are really of good quality: much of the writing is strong and fresh". But he added as to its faults that "the thing hangs too loosely together", and that some of the scenes were wildly extravagant, "so that they read like some clever lad's dream". He wound up by saying, "If the man is young he has stuff and purpose in him".

It was perhaps not usual for a first haphazard attempt

at fiction to receive such close attention from so experienced a publisher as Mr. Macmillan, and so real a man of letters as Mr. Morley. However, Hardy seems to have done little in the matter during the autumn, beyond re-writing some of the pages; but in December he paid a flying visit to London, and saw Mr. Macmillan.

The substance of the interview was that though *The Poor Man and the Lady*, if printed, might create a considerable curiosity, it was a class of book which Macmillan himself could not publish; but if Hardy were bent on issuing it he would probably have no difficulty in doing so through another firm, such as that of Chapman and Hall. The young man, it is assumed, was so bent, for Mr. Macmillan gave him an introduction to Mr. Frederick Chapman, and Hardy called on the latter with the MS. under his arm. He makes a note on December 8 that he had been to see Chapman, adding: "I fear the interview was an unfortunate one." He returned to Dorchester, leaving the MS. in Mr. Chapman's hands, and this brought the year to an unsatisfactory close—so far as it affected Hardy's desire to get into print as the author of a three-volume novel, since he could not do so as a poet without paying for publication.

In the midst of these attempts at authorship, and the intermittent preparation of architectural drawings, Hardy found time to read a good many books. The only reference discoverable includes various plays of Shakespeare, Walpole's *Letters to Sir Horace Mann* in six volumes, Thackeray, Macaulay, Walt Whitman, Virgil's *Aeneid* (of which he never wearied), and other books during his interval of leisure.

The following note, amongst others, occurs in his pocket-book this autumn:

"The village sermon. If it was very bad the parish concluded that he [the vicar] wrote it himself; if very good, that his wife wrote it; if middling, that he bought it, so

that they could have a nap without offending him." What parish this refers to is unknown.

There is also another note, some days later :

"How people will laugh in the midst of a misery ! Some would soon get to whistle in Hell."

1869

Presumably it was the uncertainty of his position between architecture and literature, and a vague sense of ominousness at getting no reply (so far as can be ascertained) from Messrs. Chapman and Hall, that led Hardy to London again during the January of the new year.

Suggestions that he should try his hand at articles in reviews were made to him by Mr. Macmillan, and also by the critic of his manuscript, Mr. Morley, with whom he got acquainted about this time, Morley offering him an introduction to the editor of *The Saturday Review*. But Hardy was not so much in want of a means of subsistence—having always his father's house to fall back upon in addition to architectural jobs which were offered him readily by Blomfield and other London architects—as of a clear call to him which course in life to take—the course he loved, and which was his natural instinct, that of letters, or the course all practical wisdom dictated, that of architecture.

He stayed on in London lodgings, studying pictures at the South Kensington Museum and other places, and reading desultorily, till at last a letter did arrive from Chapman and Hall. On his calling at their address in Piccadilly Chapman was in the back part of the shop, and on Hardy's joining him said with nonchalance, ignoring Hardy's business, "You see that old man talking to my clerk ? He's Thomas Carlyle." Hardy turned and saw leaning on one elbow at the clerk's desk an aged figure in an inverness cape and slouched hat. "Have a good look at

him", continued Chapman. "You'll be glad I pointed him out to you some day." Hardy was rather surprised that Chapman did not think enough of Thomas Carlyle to attend to his wants in person, but said nothing.

The publisher stated they could not purchase the MS. outright, but that they would publish it if he would guarantee a small sum against loss—say £20. The offer on the whole was fair and reasonable: Hardy agreed to the guarantee, Chapman promised to put the book in hand and to send a memorandum of his undertaking to publish it; and Hardy shortly after left London, expecting proof-sheets soon to be forwarded.

As they did not come he may have written to inquire about them; anyhow Messrs. Chapman suddenly asked him in a note if he would call on them and meet "the gentleman who read your manuscript"—whose opinion they would like him to have.

He went in March, by appointment as to the day and hour, it is believed, not knowing that the "gentleman" was George Meredith. He was shown into a back room of the publishing offices (opposite Sackville Street, and where Prince's Restaurant now stands); and before him, in the dusty and untidy apartment, piled with books and papers, was a handsome man in a frock coat—"buttoned at the waist, but loose above"—no other than Meredith in person, his ample dark-brown beard, wavy locks, and somewhat dramatic manner lending him a striking appearance to the younger man's eye, who even then did not know his name.

Meredith had the manuscript in his hand, and began lecturing Hardy upon it in a sonorous voice. No record was kept by the latter of their conversation, but the gist of it he remembered very well. It was that the firm were willing to publish the novel as agreed, but that he, the speaker, strongly advised its author not to "nail his colours to the mast" so definitely in a first book, if he wished to do

anything practical in literature; for if he printed so pronounced a thing he would be attacked on all sides by the conventional reviewers, and his future injured. The story was, in fact, a sweeping dramatic satire of the squirearchy and nobility, London society, the vulgarity of the middle class, modern Christianity, church restoration, and political and domestic morals in general, the author's views, in fact, being obviously those of a young man with a passion for reforming the world—those of many a young man before and after him; the tendency of the writing being socialistic, not to say revolutionary; yet not argumentatively so, the style having the affected simplicity of Defoe's (which had long attracted Hardy, as it did Stevenson, years later, to imitation of it). This naïve realism in circumstantial details that were pure inventions was so well assumed that both Macmillan and Morley had been perhaps a little, or more than a little, deceived by its seeming actuality; to Hardy's surprise, when he thought the matter over in later years, that his inexperienced imagination should have created figments that could win credence from such experienced heads.

The satire was obviously pushed too far—as sometimes in Swift and Defoe themselves—and portions of the book, apparently taken in earnest by both his readers, had no foundation either in Hardy's beliefs or his experience. One instance he could remember was a chapter in which, with every circumstantial detail, he described in the first person his introduction to the kept mistress of an architect who “took in washing” (as it was called in the profession)—that is, worked at his own office for other architects—the said mistress adding to her lover's income by designing for him the pulpits, altars, reredoses, texts, holy vessels, crucifixes, and other ecclesiastical furniture which were handed on to him by the nominal architects who employed her protector—the lady herself being a dancer at a music-hall when not engaged in

designing Christian emblems—all told so plausibly as to seem actual proof of the degeneracy of the age.

Whatever might have been the case with the other two, Meredith was not taken in by the affected simplicity of the narrative, and that was obviously why he warned his young acquaintance that the press would be about his ears like hornets if he published his manuscript. For though the novel might have been accepted calmly enough by the reviewers and public in these days, in genteel mid-Victorian 1869 it would no doubt have incurred, as Meredith judged, severe strictures which might have handicapped a young writer for a long time. It may be added that the most important scenes were laid in London, of which city Hardy had just had between five and six years' constant and varied experience—as only a young man at large in the metropolis can get it—knowing every street and alley west of St. Paul's like a born Londoner, which he was often supposed to be; an experience quite ignored by the reviewers of his later books, who, if he only touched on London in his pages, promptly reminded him not to write of a place he was unacquainted with, but to get back to his sheepfolds.

The upshot of this interview was that Hardy took away the MS. with him to decide on a course.

Meredith had added that Hardy could rewrite the story, softening it down considerably; or what would be much better, put it away altogether for the present, and attempt a novel with a purely artistic purpose, giving it a more complicated "plot" than was attempted with *The Poor Man and the Lady*.

Thus it happened that a first and probably very crude manuscript by an unknown young man, who had no connection with the press, or with literary circles, was read by a most experienced publisher, and by two authors among the most eminent in letters of their time. Also that they had been interested to more than an average degree in his work,

as was shown by their wish to see him, and their voluntary bestowal of good counsel. Except the writer himself, these three seem to have been the only ones whose eyes ever scanned the MS.

It was surprising enough to Hardy to find that, in the opinion of such experienced critics, he had written so aggressive and even dangerous a work (Mr. Macmillan had said it "meant mischief") almost without knowing it, for his mind had been given in the main to poetry and other forms of pure literature. What he did with the MS. is uncertain, and he could not precisely remember in after years, though he found a few unimportant leaves of it—now also gone. He fancied that he may have sent it to some other publisher just as it stood, to get another opinion before finally deciding its fate, which publisher may have thought it too risky also. What happened in respect of new writing was that he took Meredith's advice too literally, and set about constructing the eminently "sensational" plot of *Desperate Remedies*, of which anon.

Meanwhile, during his stay in London in the winter, Hardy heard news of the death at Dorchester of Mr. John Hicks, whose pupil he had been, and whom he had lately assisted; and at the end of April received a request from Mr. G. R. Crickmay, an architect of Weymouth, who had purchased Mr. Hicks's practice, to aid him in carrying out the church-restorations that Hicks had begun, or undertaken to begin. Hardy called on Mr. Crickmay, who appeared not to have studied Gothic architecture specially, if at all, but was an amiable, straight-dealing man; and Hardy assented to help him finish the churches. Probably thinking of his book, he agreed for a fortnight only in the first place, though Mr. Crickmay had asked for a longer time.

During May Hardy continued to prepare for Crickmay, in Hicks's old Dorchester office, the church-drawings

he had already made some progress with ; and the arrangement proved eminently satisfactory, as is evident, Mr. Crickmay proposing to enlist Hardy's services for three months certain at his Weymouth office, the church-work left unfinished by Hicks turning out to be more than had been anticipated. It is to be gathered that Hardy considered this brief occupation would afford, at any rate, breathing-time while he should ruminate on what it was best to do about the writing of the novels, and he closed with Crickmay for a term which was afterwards still further lengthened by unforeseen circumstances.

He used to remember that after coming away from the interview with Crickmay with much lightness of heart at having shelved further thought about himself for at least three months, he stood opposite the Burdon Hotel on the Esplanade, facing the beautiful sun-lit bay, and listened to the Town band's performance of a set of charming new waltzes by Johann Strauss. He inquired their name, and found that it was the "Morgenblätter". The verses "At a Seaside Town" must refer in their background to this place at this time and a little onward, though the gist of them can be fancy only.

He now became regularly resident at Weymouth, and took lodgings there, rowing in the Bay almost every evening of this summer, and bathing at seven in the morning either on the pebble-beach towards Preston, or diving off from a boat. Being—like Swinburne—a swimmer, he would lie a long time on his back on the surface of the waves, rising and falling with the tide in the warmth of the morning sun. He used to tell that, after the enervation of London, this tonic existence by the sea seemed ideal, and that physically he went back ten years in his age almost as by the touch of an enchanter's wand.

In August or September a new assistant came to Mr. Crickmay's drawing-offices, who was afterwards sketched in *Desperate Remedies* as "Edward Springrove"—and in

November this young man persuaded Hardy to join a quadrille class in the town, which was a source of much amusement to them both. Dancing was still an art in those days, though Hardy remarked once that he found the young ladies of Weymouth heavier on the arm than their London sisters. By the time that winter drew on he had finished all the drawings for church-restoration that had been placed in his hands, but he remained at his Weymouth lodgings, working at the MS. of *Desperate Remedies*, the melodramatic novel, quite below the level of *The Poor Man and the Lady*, which was the unfortunate consequence of Meredith's advice to "write a story with a plot".

A DEVELOPMENT

So 1869 passed, and at the beginning of February in the year following Hardy gave up his rooms at Weymouth and returned to his rural home to be able to concentrate more particularly on the MS. than he could do in a lively town and as a member of a dancing-class where a good deal of flirtation went on, the so-called "class" being, in fact, a gay gathering for dances and love-making by adepts of both sexes. The poem entitled "The Dawn after the Dance", and dated "Weymouth, 1869", is supposed, though without proof, to have some bearing on these dances.

He had not been in the seclusion of his mother's house more than a week when he received the following letter from Mr. Crickmay, which, as it led to unexpected emotional developments, it may be worth while to give verbatim :

WEYMOUTH,
11th February, 1870.

DEAR SIR :

Can you go into Cornwall for me, to take a plan and particulars of a church I am about to rebuild there? It

must be done early next week, and I should be glad to see you on Monday morning.—Yours truly,

G. R. CRICKMAY.

This was the church of St. Juliot, near Boscastle, of which Hardy had vaguely heard in Mr. John Hicks's time as being likely to turn up for manipulation, and had been struck by its romantic sound. Despite the somewhat urgent summons he declined the job, the moment being inconvenient with the new novel in hand. But receiving a more persuasive request from Crickmay later, and having finished the MS. of *Desperate Remedies* (except the three or four final chapters) by the beginning of March, he agreed to go on the errand.

Sending off, therefore, on the previous Saturday the copy of his second novel to Mr. Alexander Macmillan, whom he now regarded as a friend, he set out on Monday March 7 for the remote parish mentioned, in a county he had never entered, though it was not distant. It was a journey of seeming unimportance, and was reluctantly undertaken, yet it turned out to have lifelong consequences for him. The restoration of this church was, moreover, the work which brought to a close Hardy's labours in Gothic architecture, though he did not know it at the time.

Though the distance was not great the way was tedious, there being few railways in Cornwall at this date. Rising at four in the morning, and starting by starlight from his country retreat, armed with sketch-book, measuring-tape, and rule, he did not reach Launceston till four in the afternoon, where he hired a conveyance for the additional sixteen or seventeen miles' distance by the Boscastle road towards the north coast, and the spot with the charming name—the dilapidated church, parish, and residence of the Rev. Caddell Holder, M.A. Oxon.

It was a cloudy evening at the end of a fine day, with a

dry breeze blowing ; and leaving the Boscastle highway by a by-road to the left he reached St. Juliot Rectory, by which time it was quite dark. His arrival and entry can best be described in the words of the lady whom he met that night for the first time, and who later on became his wife. Long afterwards she wrote down her "Recollections", which are given in the following pages in full so far as they relate to her husband, these making up the whole of the second half of her manuscript, the first half being entirely concerned with other members of her family and herself before she knew him.

She was born at 10 York Street, Plymouth, and baptized at St. Andrew's Church, being the younger daughter of Mr. J. Attersoll Gifford, a solicitor. She had grown up in a house close to the Hoe, which she used to call "the playground of her childhood". She would relate how, to her terror at first, she was daily dipped as a little girl in the pools under the Hoe ; and on its cliffs—very much more rugged than now—had had her youthful adventures, one of which, leaving her clinging to a crag, would have cost her her life but for the timely aid of a kind boatman. Her education was carried on at a school for young ladies also overlooking the Hoe's green slopes, where, to use her own words, "military drills took place on frequent mornings, and then our dear instructress drew down the blinds". At nineteen she removed from Plymouth with her parents.

CHAPTER V

ST. JULIOT

1870: *Act.* 29-30

THE LATTER PART OF MRS. (EMMA LAVINIA) HARDY'S MS.,
FOUND AFTER HER DEATH, AND ENTITLED "SOME
RECOLLECTIONS".

[The words in square brackets are
added to make the allusions intelligible.]

"My only sister married the Rev. Caddell Holder, son of a Judge of Barbadoes, where he was born: he often spoke of his beautiful home there, with oranges growing by his bedroom window. At Trinity College, Oxford, he was a 'gentleman-commoner' (this is now abolished), where so far as he could discover his only privilege [from the distinction] was being allowed to walk upon the grass and wear a gold-tasselled cap, he used to say. He was rector of St. Juliot, North Cornwall, where I [first] knew him; and it was there that my husband made my acquaintance, which afterwards proved a romance in full for us. . . .

"[He was] a man older than herself by many years, and somewhat delicate because of his West Indian birth; he was, however, energetic, and a very Boanerges in his preaching, which style was greatly relished by the simple folk of his scattered parish. In those days clergymen were [often] very lax in their duties, but he was quite exact and faithful, and [after I went to live there with my sister] we

were marshalled off in regular staff style to the services. On Sundays they were two only, and the choir *nil*—the whole being carried out by the parson, his wife, myself, and the clerk. The congregation were mostly silent, or merely murmuring occasionally. The duty, however, was only arduous on Sundays.

“They were married from our home, and immediately after went to his—and I went with them—to the said St. Juliot Rectory. My sister required my help, for it was a difficult parish, from neglect by a former incumbent, whose wife, however, had done as much as she could, even to ringing the bell for service.

“At this date [of writing, *i.e.* 1911] it seems as if all had been arranged in orderly sequence for me, link after link occurring in a chain of movements to bring me to the point where my own fortunes came on.

“St. Juliot is a romantic spot indeed of North Cornwall. It was sixteen miles away from a station then, [and a place] where the belief in witchcraft was carried out in actual practice among the primitive inhabitants. Traditions and strange gossipings [were] the common talk . . . indulged in by those isolated natives [of a parish] where newspapers rarely penetrated, or [were] thrown aside for local news; where new books rarely came, or strangers, and where hard labour upon the stony soil made a cold, often ill-natured, working class; yet with some good traits and fine exceptions. Our neighbours beyond the hamlets were nine miles off, or most of them.

“When we arrived at the Rectory there was a great gathering and welcome from the parishioners, and a tremendous fusillade of salutes, cheering, and bell-ringing—quite a hubbub to welcome the Rector home with his new wife. Then these welcomers (all men and nearly all young) came into the hall to drink the healths of bridegroom and bride, and a speech was made by the foremost young farmer and duly replied to by my brother-in-law. . . .

It proved indeed an eventful day for me, for my future was bound up in that day in a way which I could not foresee.

"The whole parish seemed delighted with the event and the prospect of having things in better order after the long neglect. . . . Riding about on my Fanny [her pony] I enjoyed the place immensely, and helped my sister in the house affairs, visiting the parish folk, and playing the harmonium on Sundays. . . .

"It was a very poor parish ; the church had been a long while out of repair for want of funds ; the Patron lived abroad : in contrast with these days of frequent services [and attendance] it was unfrequented, the Sunday congregation in the morning not large, not much larger in the evenings [afternoons]. No week-day services were held. The tower went on cracking from year to year, and the bells remained in the little north transept [to which they had been removed for safety], their mouths open upward. The carved bench-ends rotted more and more, the ivy hung gaily from the roof timbers, and the birds and the bats had a good time up there unmolested ; no one seemed to care. The Architect continued delaying and delaying to come or send his head man to begin operations, though my sister was active in the matter, both Patron and Architect getting urgent appeals from her, till the former decided at last to commence.

"It was the period of Church restoration, most churches being dilapidated more or less. My life now began. . . .

"Scarcely any author and his wife could have had a much more romantic meeting, with its unusual circumstances in bringing them together from two different, though neighbouring counties to this one at this very remote spot, with a beautiful sea-coast, and the wild Atlantic Ocean rolling in with its magnificent waves and spray, its white gulls, and black choughs and grey puffins, its cliffs and rocks and gorgeous sunsettings, sparkling redness in a track widening from the horizon to the shore. All this

should be seen in the winter to be truly appreciated. No summer visitors can have a true idea of its power to awaken heart and soul. [It was] an unforgettable experience to me, scampering up and down the hills on my beloved mare alone, wanting no protection, the rain going down my back often, and my hair floating on the wind.

"I wore a soft deep dark coloured brown habit longer than to my heels, (as worn then), which had to be caught up to one side when walking, and thrown over the left arm gracefully and carefully, and this to be practised during the riding instruction—all of which my father [had] taught me with great pleasure and pride in my appearance and aptitude. I also wore a brown felt hat turned up at the sides. Fanny and I were one creature, and very happy. She was a lovely brown colour too, stopping where she liked, to drink or munch, I often getting off sketching and gathering flowers. The villagers stopped to gaze when I rushed down the hills, and a buttermilk man laid down his basket once to exclaim loudly. No one except myself dared to ride in such fashion.

"Sometimes I left Fanny, and clambered down to the rocks and seal-caves. Sometimes I visited a favourite in the scattered parish. . . .

"When it was known that the Church-restoration was to be gone on with, the whole village was alive about it. Mr. Crickmay of Weymouth undertook it—Mr. Hicks, the first architect consulted, having died in the interval. The [assistant-architect] of his office was to come on a certain day. The letter that brought this intelligence interested the whole house, and afterwards, later in the day, the whole parish too; it seemed almost wonderful that a fixed date should at last be given and the work set in hand, after so many years of waiting, of difficulties, and delays, since back in the time of the previous incumbent. All were delighted. I had myself worked hard for my brother-in-law, collecting small sums from time to time and selling

water-colour sketches I had painted, and saving household expenses in order that the historic old church might be rebuilt—there being no landed proprietor, no ‘equals’ in the parish (as the rector often explained plaintively). So we were all ready to see the fruition of our endeavours, that is, my sister’s and mine particularly.

“I must confess to a curiosity started by the coming event as to what the Architect would be like; seeing few strangers we had a vivid interest in every one who came: a strange clergyman, an occasional *locum-tenens*, a school-inspector, a stray missionary, or school-lecturer—all were welcome, including this architect to put us to rights at once.

“It was a lovely Monday evening in March [1870], after a wild winter, that we were on the *qui-vive* for the stranger,¹ who would have a tedious journey, his home being two counties off by the route necessitated changing trains many times, and waiting at stations, a sort of cross-jump journey like a chess-knight’s move. The only damp to our gladness was the sudden laying up of my brother-in-law by gout, and he who was the chief person could not be present on the arrival of our guest. The dinner-cloth was laid; my sister had gone to her husband who required her constant attention. At that very moment the front-door bell rang, and the architect was ushered in. I had to receive him alone, and felt a curious uneasy embarrassment at receiving anyone, especially so necessary a person as the architect. I was immediately arrested by his familiar appearance, as if I had seen him in a dream—his slightly different accent, his soft voice; also I noticed a blue paper sticking out of his pocket. I was explaining who I was, as I saw that he took me for the parson’s

¹ The verses entitled “A Man was drawing near to Me” obviously relate to this arrival. But in them Hardy assumes that she was not thinking about his coming, though from this diary one gathers that she was; which seems to show that when writing them he had either not read her reminiscence of the evening as printed above, or had forgotten it.

daughter or wife, when my sister appeared, to my great relief, and he went up to Mr. Holder's room with her.

"So I met my husband. I thought him much older than he was. He had a beard, and a rather shabby great-coat, and had quite a business appearance. Afterwards he seemed younger, and by daylight especially so. . . . The blue paper proved to be the MS. of a poem, and not a plan of the church, he informed me, to my surprise.

"After this our first meeting there had to be many visits to the church, and these visits, of deep interest to both, merged in those of further acquaintance and affection, to end in marriage, but not till after four years.

"At first, though I was interested in him, the church-matters were paramount, and in due time I laid the foundation stone one morning [for the aisle and tower that were to be rebuilt]; with a bottle containing a record of the proceedings, the school-children attending. I plastered it well, the foreman said. Mr. Holder made a speech to the young ones to remember the event and speak of it to their descendants—just as if it had been a matter of world-wide interest. I wonder if they do remember it, and me.

"The work went rapidly on under the direction of the Architect, who had stayed on his first visit rather longer than intended. We showed him some of the neighbourhood, some clergymen and their wives came to visit us: we were all much pleased at the beginning. Mr. Holder got well again. The Patron of the living, who lived in Antigua, wrote to inquire about it; an account was duly sent, and he replied that he was coming to see it if he could, and would certainly be at the opening.

"My Architect came two or three times a year from that time to visit me. I rode my pretty mare Fanny and he walked by my side, and I showed him some [more] of the neighbourhood—the cliffs, along the roads, and through the scattered hamlets, sometimes gazing down at the solemn small shores below, where the seals lived, coming out of

great deep caverns very occasionally. We sketched and talked of books; often we walked to Boscastle Harbour down the beautiful Vallency Valley where we had to jump over stones and climb over a low wall by rough steps, or get through a narrow pathway, to come out on great wide spaces suddenly, with a sparkling little brook going the same way, in which we once lost a tiny picnic-tumbler, and there it is to this day no doubt between two of the boulders.¹

"Sometimes we all drove to Tintagel, and Trebarwith Strand where donkeys [word illegible] employed to carry seaweed to the farmers; Strangles Beach also, Bossiney, Bude, and other places on the coast. Lovely drives they were, with sea-views all along at intervals, and very dawdling enjoyable slow ones; sometimes to visit a neighbouring clergyman and his family. We grew much interested in each other. I found him a perfectly new subject of study and delight and he found a 'mine' in me he said. He was quite unlike any other person who came to see us, for they were slow of speech and ideas.

"In the intervals of his visits we corresponded, and I studied, and sketched, and drove my brother-in-law and sister to the nearest market-town, Camelford, nine miles off, or to Launceston to see my cousins. The man-servant taught me to jump hurdles on Fanny, but Fanny, though not at all objecting, got a little lame, so we stopped jumping.

"I like to think of those details and small events, and am fancying some other people may like to have them.

"It was a pleasant time, though there were difficulties in the parish. I have never liked the Cornish working-orders as I do Devonshire folk; their so-called admirable independence of character was most disagreeable to live with, and usually amounted to absence of kindly interest in others, though it was unnoticeable by casual acquaint-

¹ This incident was versified by Hardy afterwards, and entitled "Under the Waterfall".

ance. . . . Nevertheless their nature had a glamour about it—that of an old-world romantic expression; and then sometimes there came to one's cognizance in the hamlets a dear heart-whole person.

“So the days went on between the visits. The church-opening was somewhat impressive, the element of unusualness being more conspicuous however by the immense numbers of people outside waiting for it to be over and the lunch to begin, than the many attentive and admiring parishioners within, collected imperatively by the rector's wife and himself. Mr. Holder was in a good state of health and spirits; my sister was very important. The patron of the living, the Rev. Richard Rawle, [who owned land in the parish, and was about this time consecrated as Bishop of Trinidad] was present; but no architect came on that brilliant occasion.¹ He appeared, however, on the same scene from time to time afterwards.

“I had two pleasant changes—one to stay at Bath with an old friend of the family; and when my chosen came there too, by her kindness, we had together an interesting time. And I went as country cousin to my brother in London, and was duly astonished, which gave him even more pleasure than it did me.

“After a little time I copied a good deal of manuscript, which went to and fro by post, and I was very proud and happy doing this—which I did in the privacy of my own room, where I also read and wrote the letters.

“The rarity of the visits made them highly delightful to both; we talked much of plots, possible scenes, tales and poetry, and of his own work. He came either from Dorset or London, driving from Launceston station eighteen [sixteen and a half] miles off.

“The day we were married was a perfect September day—the 17th of the month—1874,—not of brilliant sun-

¹ Neither Hardy nor Crickmay was able to attend, for some unknown reason.

shine, but wearing a soft sunny luminousness ; just as it should be.

"I have had various experiences, interesting some, sad others, since that lovely day, but all showing that an Unseen Power of great benevolence directs my ways ; I have some philosophy, and mysticism, and an ardent belief in Christianity and the life beyond this present one, all which makes any existence curiously interesting. As one watches *happenings* (and even if should occur unhappy happenings), outward circumstances are of less importance if Christ is our highest ideal. A strange unearthly brilliance shines around our path, penetrating and dispersing difficulties with its warmth and glow.

"E. L. HARDY.

"MAX GATE. *January 4th, 1911.*"¹

This transcript from the first Mrs. Hardy's "Recollections" (of the existence of which he was unaware till after her death) has carried us onward four years further than the date of Thomas Hardy's arrival in Cornwall on that evening of March 1870. He himself entered in a memorandum-book a few rough notes of his visit, and from these we are able to glean vaguely his impressions of the experience.

It is apparent that he was soon, if not immediately, struck by the nature and appearance of the lady who received him. She was so *living*, he used to say. Though her features were not regular her complexion at this date was perfect in hue, her figure and movement graceful, and her corn-coloured hair abundant in its coils.

It may be mentioned here that the story *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (which Hardy himself classes among his Romances and Fantasies—as if to suggest its visionary nature) has been considered to show a picture of his own personality as the architect on this visit. But in addition to Hardy's

¹ It will be seen later that she died the year after this was written.



Emma Lavinia Gifford
(afterwards Mrs. Thomas Hardy)
1870

own testimony there is proof that this is not the case, he having ever been shy of putting his personal characteristics into his novels. The Adonis depicted was known to be both in appearance and temperament an idealization of a pupil whom Hardy found at Mr. John Hicks's on his return there temporarily from London; a nephew of that architect, and exactly of the age attributed to Stephen Smith. He is represented as altogether more youthful and sanguine in nature than Hardy, a thoughtful man of twenty-nine, with years of London buffeting and architectural and literary experiences, was at this time. Many of his verses with which readers have since grown familiar in *Wessex Poems* had already been written. Stephen Smith's father was a mason in Hardy's father's employ, combined with one near Boscastle, while Smith's ingenious mode of being tutored in Latin was based on a story Hardy had from Holder, as that of a man he had known. Its practicability is, however, doubtful. Henry Knight the reviewer, Elfride's second lover, was really much more like Thomas Hardy as described in his future wife's diary just given; while the event of the young man arriving as a town-stranger at a village with which he was quite familiar, and the catastrophe that ensued when his familiarity with it was discovered, was an experience of an uncle of his, of which the dramatic possibilities had long arrested him. His own wooing in the "Delectable Duchy" ran, in fact, without a hitch from beginning to end, and with encouragement from all parties concerned.

But the whole story, except as to the lonely drive across the hills towards the coast, the architectural detail, and a few other external scenes and incidents, is so at variance with any possible facts as to be quite misleading, Hardy's wilful purpose in his early novels until *Far from the Madding Crowd* appeared, if not later, having been to mystify the reader as to their locality, origin, and authorship by various interchanges and inventions, probably

owing at first to his doubt if he would pursue the craft, and his sense of the shadow that would fall on an architect who had failed as a novelist. He modified the landscape, and called the Rectory a vicarage in early editions, showing a church with the sea visible from it, which was not true of St. Juliot. The character and appearance of Elfride have points in common with those of Mrs. Hardy in quite young womanhood, a few years before Hardy met her (though her eyes would have been described as deep grey, not as blue); moreover, like Elfride, the moment she was on a horse she was part of the animal. But this is all that can be asserted, the plot of the story being one that he had thought of and written down long before he knew her.

What he says about the visit is laconic and hurried, but interesting enough to be given here:

"March 7. The dreary yet poetical drive over the hills. Arrived at St. Juliot Rectory between 6 and 7. Received by young lady in brown, (Miss Gifford, the rector's sister-in-law). Mr. Holder gout. Saw Mrs. Holder. The meal. Talk. To Mr. Holder's room. Returned downstairs. Music."

"March 8. Austere grey view of hills from bedroom window. A funeral. Man tolled the bell (which stood inverted on the ground in the neglected transept) by lifting the clapper and letting it fall against the side. Five bells stood thus in a row (having been taken down from the cracked tower for safety). Staying there drawing and measuring all day, with intervals for meals at rectory."

"March 9. Drove with Mrs. Holder and Miss Gifford to Boscastle, and on to Tintagel and Penpethy slate-quarries, with a view to the church roofing. Mr. Symons accompanied us to the quarries. Mr. Symons did not think himself a native; he was only born there. Now Mrs. Symons *was* a native; her family had been there 500 years.

Talked about Douglas Cook coming home [the first editor of the *Saturday Review*, whom the Holders had known; buried on the hill above Tintagel]. . . . Music in the evening. The two ladies sang duets, including 'The Elfin Call', 'Let us dance on the sands', etc. . . . Miss Gifford said that a man asked her for 'a drop o' that that isn't gin, please, Miss'. He meant hollands, which they kept at the Rectory, as he knew."

"*March 10.* Went with E. L. G. to Beeny Cliff. She on horseback. . . . On the cliff. . . . 'The tender grace of a day', etc. The run down to the edge. The coming home."

"In the afternoon I walked to Boscastle, Mrs. H. and E. L. G. accompanying me three-quarters of the way: the overshot mill: E. provokingly reading as she walked; evening in garden, music later in evening."

"*March 11.* Dawn. Adieu. E. L. G. had struck a light six times in her anxiety to call the servants early enough for me. The journey home. Photo of Bishop of Exeter (for Mrs. Holder)". . . .

The poem entitled "At the Word 'Farewell'", seems to refer either to this or the following visit; and the one called "When I set out for Lyonesse", refers certainly to this first visit, it having been his custom to apply the name "Lyonesse" to the whole of Cornwall. The latter poem, it may be mentioned, was hailed by a distant voice from the West of America as his sweetest lyric, an opinion from which he himself did not dissent.

"*March 12.* (Sat.) Went to Weymouth. Mr. Crickmay's account £6: 10: 9."

On April 5 having resumed lodgings at Weymouth, to proceed, probably, with the detailed drawings for the restoration of St. Juliot Church by the light of the survey and measurements he had made, Hardy received a letter from the Messrs. Macmillan declining to publish *Desperate*

Remedies, the MS. of which they returned, on the ground (it is conjectured) of their disapproval of the incidents. By this time it seemed to have dawned upon him that the Macmillan publishing-house was not in the way of issuing novels of a sensational kind: and accordingly he packed up the MS. again and posted it to the Messrs. Tinsley, a firm to which he was a stranger, but which did publish such novels. Why he did not send it to Messrs. Chapman and Hall, with whom he had now a slight link, and whose reader, George Meredith, had recommended him to write what Hardy understood to be a story of this kind, is inexplicable. Possibly it was from an adventurous feeling that he would like the story to be judged on its own merits by a house which had no knowledge of how it came into existence; possibly from inexperience. Anyhow it was a mistake from which he suffered, for there is no doubt that Meredith would have taken an interest in a book he had, or was supposed to have, instigated; and would have offered some suggestions on how to make a better use of the good material at the back of the book. However, to Tinsley's it had gone, and on May 6 Tinsley wrote, stating the terms on which he would publish it, if Hardy would complete the remaining three or four chapters of which a *précis* only had been sent.

About the second week in May, and possibly as a result of the correspondence, Hardy left Mr. Crickmay (whose church-designing he appears to have airily used as something of a stop-gap when his own literary enterprises hung fire) and on the following Monday, the 16th, he started again for London—sadly, as he said, for he had left his heart in Cornwall.

"May 18. Royal Academy. No. 118. 'Death of Ney', by Gérôme. The presence of Death makes the picture great.

"No. 985. 'Jerusalem', by the same. The *shadows only* of the three crucified ones are seen. A fine conception."



He seems to have passed the days in Town desultorily and dreamily—mostly visiting museums and picture-galleries, and it is not clear what he was waiting for there. In his leisure he seems to have written the "Ditty" in *Wessex Poems*, inscribed with Miss Gifford's initials. In May he was reading Comte. Crossing Hyde Park one morning in June he saw the announcement of Dickens's death. He was welcomed by Mr. Blomfield, to whom he lent help in finishing some drawings. Being acquainted with another well-known Gothic architect, Mr. Raphael Brandon, Hardy assisted him also for a few weeks, though not continuously.

Brandon was a man who interested him much. In collaboration with his brother David he had published, several years before, the *Analysis of Gothic Architecture* in two quarto volumes, and an extra volume on the *Open Timber Roofs of the Middle Ages*. Both these works were familiar to Hardy, having been quite text-books for architects' pupils till latterly, when the absorbing interest given to French Gothic had caused them to be superseded by the works of Norman Shaw, Nesfield, and Viollet-le-Duc. Brandon, however, was convinced that the development of modern English architecture should be based on English Gothic and not on French, as was shown in his well-known design for the Catholic Apostolic Church in Gordon Square; and that his opinion was the true one was proved in the sequel, notwithstanding that the more fashionable architects, including Arthur Blomfield, were heart and soul of the other opinion at this date. It may have been partly on this account, partly because he was a "literary architect"—a person always suspect in the profession in those days, Hardy used to say—that Brandon's practice had latterly declined, and he had drifted into a backwater, spending much time in strange projects and hopes, one of these being a scheme for unifying railway-fares on the principle of letter-postage. Hardy was in something of a

similar backwater himself—so far as there could be similarity in the circumstances of a man of twenty-nine and a man of sixty, and the old-world out-of-the-way corner of Clement's Inn where Brandon's offices were situate made his weeks with Brandon still more attractive to him, Knight's chambers in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* being drawn from Brandon's. Whilst the latter attended to his scheme for railway-travel, Hardy attended off and on to Brandon's architecture, which had fallen behindhand. Sometimes Hardy helped him also in the details of his scheme; though, having proved to himself its utter futility, he felt in an awkward dilemma; whether to show Brandon its futility and offend him, or to go against his own conscience by indulging him in the hobby.

However, the summer was passed in this way, and his friend Horace Moule, the reviewer and leader-writer, being also in London, the time was pleasant enough. Nothing seems to have been done about the novel, of which the MS., representing about seven-eighths of the whole, was apparently still lying at Tinsley's. He kept up a regular correspondence with "the young lady in brown" who had attracted him at St. Juliot Rectory, and sent books to her, reading himself among other works Shakespeare and general poetry as usual, the Bible, Alison's *Europe*, and *Mohammed and Mohammedanism* by Bosworth Smith, his friend in later years; though it does not appear that he wrote any verses.

"June 30. What the world is saying, and what the world is thinking: It is the man who bases his action upon what the world is thinking, no matter what it may be saying, who rises to the top.

"It is not by rushing straight towards fame that men come up with her, but by so adapting the direction of their path to hers that at some point ahead the two must inevitably intersect."

On July 15 war was declared by France against

Prussia—a cause of much excitement to Brandon, who during the early weeks of the struggle would go into the Strand for every edition of the afternoon papers as they came out, and bring them in and read them to Hardy, who grew as excited as he; though probably the younger man did not realize that, should England have become involved in the Continental strife, he might have been among the first to be called upon to serve, outside the regular Army. All he seems to have done was to go to a service at Chelsea Hospital and look at the tattered banners mended with netting, and talk to the old asthmatic and crippled men, many of whom in the hospital at that date had fought at Waterloo, and some in the Peninsula.

On August 6 occurred the Battle of Wörth: and on the 8th, in keeping with a promise given on his previous visit, he severed his temporary connection with Brandon and left for Cornwall.

Here, as he said, he found the “young lady in brown” of the previous winter—at that time thickly muffled from the wind—to have become metamorphosed into a young lady in summer blue, which suited her fair complexion far better; and the visit was a most happy one. His hosts drove him to various picturesque points on the wild and rugged coast near the Rectory, among others to King Arthur’s Castle, Tintagel, which he now saw for the first time; and where, owing to their lingering too long among the ruins, they found themselves locked in, only narrowly escaping being imprisoned there for the night by much signalling with their handkerchiefs to cottagers in the valley. The lingering might have been considered prophetic, seeing that, after it had been smouldering in his mind for between forty and fifty years, he constructed *The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall* from the legends connected with that romantic spot. Why he did not do it sooner, while she was still living who knew the scene so well, and had frequently painted it, it is impossible to say.

H. M. Moule, who by this date knew of the vague understanding between the pair, sent them from time to time such of the daily and weekly papers as contained his leading articles on the war. Concerning such wars Hardy entered in his notebook: "Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi!" On the day that the bloody battle of Gravelotte was fought they were reading Tennyson in the grounds of the rectory. It was at this time and spot that Hardy was struck by the incident of the old horse harrowing the arable field in the valley below, which, when in far later years it was recalled to him by a still bloodier war, he made into the little poem of three verses entitled "In Time of 'the Breaking of Nations'". Several of the pieces—as is obvious—grouped as "Poems of 1912-13" in the same volume with *Satires of Circumstance*, and three in *Moments of Vision*, namely "The Figure in the Scene", "Why did I sketch?" and "It never looks like Summer now", with doubtless many others—are known to be also memories of the present and later sojourns here in this vague romantic land of "Lyonnesse".

It was at this time, too, that he saw the last of St. Juliot Church in its original condition of picturesque neglect, the local builder laying hands on it shortly after, and razing to the ground the tower and the north aisle (which had hitherto been the nave), and the transept. Hardy much regretted the obliteration in this manner of the church's history, and, too, that he should be instrumental in such obliteration, the building as he had first set eyes on it having been so associated with what was romantic in his life. Yet his instrumentality was involuntary, the decision to alter and diminish its area having been come to before he arrived on the scene. What else could be done with the dilapidated structure was difficult to say if it had to be retained for use. The old walls of the former nave, dating from Norman or even earlier times, might possibly have been preserved. A

north door, much like a Saxon one, was inadvertently destroyed, but Hardy made a drawing of it which is preserved in the present church, with his drawings of the highly carved seat-ends and other details that have disappeared. Fortunately the old south aisle was kept intact, with its arcade, the aisle now being adapted for a nave.

It was at this church that occurred his humorous experience of the builder's view of the old chancel-screen. Hardy had made a careful drawing of it, with its decayed tracery, posts, and gilding, marking thereon where sundry patchings and scarfings were to be applied. Reaching the building one day he found a new and highly varnished travesty of the old screen standing in its place. "Well, Mr. Hardy," replied the builder in answer to his astonished inquiries, "I said to myself, I won't stand on a pound or two while I'm about it, and I'll give 'em a new screen instead of that patched-up old thing."

PART II
NOVELS—TO ILLNESS

CHAPTER VI

FIRST THREE BOOKS

1870-1873: *Act.* 30-33

HE must when in London have obtained from Tinsley the MS. of *Desperate Remedies*; for during the autumn of this year 1870 there were passing between him and Miss Gifford chapters of the story for her to make a fair copy of, the original MS. having been interlined and altered, so that it may have suffered, he thought, in the eyes of a publisher's reader by being difficult to read. He meanwhile wrote the three or four remaining chapters, and the novel—this time finished—was packed off to Tinsley in December. However, a minute fact seems to suggest that Hardy was far from being in bright spirits about his book and his future at this time. On the margin of his copy of *Hamlet* the following passage is marked with the date, "December 15, 1870":

"Thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart: but it is no matter!"

Tinsley wrote his terms again, which for some unaccountable reason were worse now than they had been in the first place, an advance of £75 being demanded; and the following is a transcript of Hardy's letter to the publisher on these points, at the end of December:

"I believe I am right in understanding your terms thus—that if the gross receipts reach the costs of publishing I shall receive the £75 back again, and if they are more than the costs I shall have £75, added to half the receipts

beyond the costs: (*i.e.*, assuming the expenditure to be £100, and the receipts £200, I should have returned to me £75+£50=£125.)

“Will you be good enough to say, too, if the sum includes advertising to the customary extent, and about how long after my paying the money the book would appear.”

This adventurous arrangement by the would-be author, who at that date had only £123 in the world, beyond what he might have obtained from his father—which was not much—and who was virtually if not distinctly engaged to be married to a girl with no money except in reversion after the death of relatives, was actually carried out by him in the January following (1871): when, being in London again, he paid the £75 over to Tinsley in Bank of England notes (rather, as it seemed, to Tinsley’s astonishment, Hardy said) and retired to Dorset to correct the proofs, filling up the leisure moments not by anything practical, but by writing down such snatches of the old country ballads as he could hear from aged people. On the 25th March the book was published anonymously in three volumes; and on the 30th he again went to his Weymouth lodgings to lend Mr. Crickmay more help in his church-restorations.

On April 1 *Desperate Remedies* received a striking review in the *Athenæum* as being a powerful novel, and on April 13 an even better notice in the *Morning Post* as being an eminent success. But, alas, on the 22nd the *Spectator* brought down its heaviest-leaded pastoral staff on the prematurely happy volumes, the reason for this violence being mainly the author’s daring to suppose it possible that an unmarried lady owning an estate could have an illegitimate child.

“This is an absolutely anonymous story” began the review: “no assumption of a *nom-de-plume* which might, at some future time, disgrace the family name, and still

more the Christian name, of a repentant and remorseful novelist—and very right too. By all means let him bury the secret in the profoundest depths of his own heart, out of reach, if possible, of his own consciousness. The law is hardly just which prevents Tinsley Brothers from concealing their participation also.”

When Moule, whom Hardy had not consulted on the venture, read the reception of the novel by the *Spectator* he wrote a brief line to Hardy bidding him not to mind the slating. After its first impact, which was with good reason staggering, it does not seem to have worried Hardy much or at any rate for long (though one of the personalities insinuated by the reviewer, in clumsy humour, that the novel must have been “a desperate remedy for an emaciated purse”, may well have been galling enough). And indeed about this time he noted down: “Strictly, we should resent wrongs, be placid at justice, and grateful for favours. But I know one who is placid at a wrong, and would be grateful for simple justice; while a favour, if he ever gained one, would turn his brain.” He remembered, for long years after, how he had read this review as he sat on a stile leading to the eweleaze he had to cross on his way home to Bockhampton. The bitterness of that moment was never forgotten; at the time he wished that he were dead.

But that humorous observation was not seriously disturbed in him is shown by what he entered immediately after:

“*End of April.* At the dairy. The dog looks as if he were glad that he is a dog. The cows look at him with a melancholy expression, as though they were sorry they are cows, and have to be milked, and to show too much dignity to roll in the mulch as he does. . . . The dairy-maid flings her feet about the dairy floor in walking, as if they were mops.”

Anyhow, in May he enjoyed another visit to Cornwall.

But in returning therefrom the day after his birthday in June he received a fresh buffet from circumstance in seeing at Exeter Station *Desperate Remedies* in Messrs. Smith and Son's surplus catalogue for sale at 2s. 6d. the three volumes, and thought the *Spectator* had snuffed out the book, as it probably had done.

Although this was a serious matter for a beginner who had ventured on the novel £75 out of the £123 he possessed, one reason for the mitigation of his trouble may well have been that the powerfully not to say wildly melodramatic situations had been concocted in a style which was quite against his natural grain, through too crude an interpretation of George Meredith's advice. It was a sort of thing he had never contemplated writing, till, finding himself in a corner, it seemed necessary to attract public attention at all hazards. What Meredith would have thought of the result of his teaching was not ascertained. Yet there was nothing in the book—admittedly an extremely clever novel—to call for such castigation, which, oddly enough, rather stultified itself by certain concessions on the nameless author's ability. Moreover he was surprised some time later by a letter from the reviewer, a stranger—whether dictated by pricks of conscience, an uneasy suspicion that he had mistaken his man, or otherwise, is unknown—showing some regret for his violence. Hardy replied to the letter—tardily and curtly enough at first, it is true—but as it dawned upon him that the harm had been done him not through malice but honest wrongheadedness he ceased to harbour resentment, and became acquainted with his critic, the *Spectator* reviewing him later with much generosity.

During June and July he marked time, as it were, by doing some more Gothic drawings for Crickmay, though in no very grand spirits, if we may judge from a marginal mark with the date "July 1871" in his Shakespeare, opposite the passage in *Macbeth*:



Thomas Hardy, aged 30
c.1870

Things at their worst will cease, or else climb upward
To what they were before.

Later in the summer he finished the short and quite rustic story entitled *Under the Greenwood Tree. A Rural Painting of the Dutch School*—the execution of which had arisen from a remark of Mr. John Morley's on *The Poor Man and the Lady*, that the country scenes in the latter were the best in the book, the "tranter" of *The Poor Man and the Lady* being reintroduced.

The pages of this idyll—at first intended to be called *The Mellstock Quire* but altered to *Under the Greenwood Tree* because titles from poetry were in fashion just then—were dispatched to the Messrs. Macmillan some time the same autumn, and in due course Hardy received from them a letter which, events having rendered him sensitive, he read to mean that the firm did not wish to have anything to do with his "Rural Painting of the Dutch School", although they said that "they felt strongly inclined to avail themselves of his offer of it"; hence he wrote to them to return the MS. This was an unfortunate misunderstanding. It was not till its acceptance and issue by another publishing-house the year after that he discovered they had never declined it, and indeed would have been quite willing to print it a little later on.

They had taken the trouble to enclose when writing about the tale the opinion of the "accomplished critic" to whom they had submitted it, the chief points of which may be quoted here:

"The work in this story is extremely careful, natural, and delicate, and the writer deserves more than common credit for the pains which he has taken with his style, and with the harmony of his construction and treatment. It is a simple and uneventful sketch of a rural courtship, with a climax of real delicacy of idea. . . . I don't prophesy a large market for it, because the work is so delicate

as not to hit every taste by any means. But it is good work, and would please people whose taste was not ruined by novels of exaggerated action or forced ingenuity. . . . The writer would do well to shut his ears to the fooleries of critics, which his letter to you proves that he does not do."

However, deeming their reply on the question of publishing the tale to be ambiguous at least, he got it back, threw the MS. into a box with his old poems, being quite sick of all such, and began to think about other ways and means. He consulted Miss Gifford by letter, declaring that he had banished novel-writing for ever, and was going on with architecture henceforward. But she, with no great opportunity of reasoning on the matter, yet, as Hardy used to think and say—truly or not—with that rapid instinct which serves women in such good stead, and may almost be called preternatural vision, wrote back instantly her desire that he should adhere to authorship, which she felt sure would be his true vocation. From the very fact that she wished thus, and set herself aside altogether—architecture being obviously the quick way to an income for marrying on—he was impelled to consider her interests more than his own. Unlike the case of Browning and Elizabeth Barrett, no letters between the couple are extant, to show the fluctuation of their minds on this vital matter. But what happened was that Hardy applied himself to architectural work during the winter 1871-72 more steadily than he ever had done in his life before, and in the spring of the latter year again set out for London, determined to stifle his constitutional tendency to care for life only as an emotion and not as a scientific game, and fully bent on sticking to the profession which had been the choice of his parents for him rather than his own; but with a faint dream at the back of his mind that he might perhaps write verses as an occasional hobby.

The years 1872 and 1873 were pre-eminently years of

unexpectedness. Having engaged to give some help to Mr. T. Roger Smith, a well-known London architect and Professor of Architecture at the Royal Institute of British Architects, he speedily found himself on his arrival in the first-named year assisting Professor Smith in designing schools for the London School Board, which had then lately come into existence, public competition between architects for such designs being arranged by the Board from time to time. Hardy had no sooner settled down to do his best in this business than he met in the middle of a crossing by Trafalgar Square his friend Moule, whom he had not seen for a long time. Moule, a scholar and critic of perfect taste, firmly believed in Hardy's potentialities as a writer, and said he hoped he still kept a hand on the pen; but Hardy seems to have declared that he had thrown up authorship at last and for all. Moule was grieved at this, but merely advised him not to give up writing altogether, since, supposing anything were to happen to his eyes from the fine architectural drawing, literature would be a resource for him; he could dictate a book, article, or poem, but not a geometrical design. This, Hardy used to say, was essentially all that passed between them; but by a strange coincidence Moule's words were brought back to his mind one morning shortly after by his seeing, for the first time in his life, what seemed like floating specks on the white drawing-paper before him.

For some reason or other at this date—a year after its publication—he wrote to his publishers to render an account of their transactions over *Desperate Remedies*, which he had once before requested, but had not been very curious upon; for though the *Saturday Review* had brought the volumes to life after their slaughter by the *Spectator*, he quite supposed he had lost on the venture both his time and his money. By return of post Tinsley Brothers rendered the account, showing that they had printed 500 copies of the novel in three volumes, and sold

370, and enclosing a cheque for £60, as being all that was returnable to him out of the £75 paid as guarantee—after the costs and the receipts were balanced, no part of the receipts being due to him.

From these figures Hardy, who did not examine them closely, found that after all he had only lost his labour and £15 in money—and was much gratified thereby.

Quite soon after, while reading in the Strand a poster of the Italian Opera, a heavy hand was laid on his shoulder, and turning he saw Tinsley himself, who asked when Hardy was going to let him have another novel.

Hardy, with thoughts of the balance-sheet, drily told him never.

“Wot, now!” said Tinsley. “Haven’t you anything written?”

Hardy remarked that he had written a short story some time before, but didn’t know what had become of the MS., and did not care. He also had outlined one for three volumes; but had abandoned it. He was now doing better things, and attending to his profession of architect.

“Damned if that isn’t what I thought you wos!” exclaimed Mr. Tinsley. “Well, now, can’t you get that story, and show it to me?”

Hardy would not promise, reminding the publisher that the account he had rendered for the other books was not likely to tempt him to publish a second.

“’Pon my soul, Mr. Hardy,” said Tinsley, “you wouldn’t have got another man in London to print it! Oh, be hanged if you would!’twas a blood-curdling story! Now please try to find that new manuscript and let me see it.”

Hardy could not at first recollect what he had done with the MS., but recalling at last he wrote to his parents at home, telling them where to search for it, and to forward it to him.

When, the first week in April, *Under the Greenwood*

~~The Mellstock Quire~~
Under the Greenwood Tree
A rural painting of the Dutch School.

Part I. Winter.

Chapter I
Mellstock Lane.

To dwellers in a wood, almost every species of tree has its voice as well as its feature. At the passing of the breeze the fir-trees sob & moan no less distinctly than they rock: the holly whistles as it battles with itself: the ash hisses amid its quivering: the beech rustles as its flat boughs rise & fall. And winter, which modifies the notes of such trees as shed their leaves, does not destroy their individuality.

On a cold & stormy Christmas-eve, not less than a generation ago a man was passing along a lane in the darkness of a plantation that whispered thus distinctly to his intelligence. All the evidences of his nature were those afforded by the spirit of his footsteps, which succeeded each other lightly & quickly, & by the clearness of his voice as he sang in a rural cadence.

"— With the rose & the lily
And the daffodowndilly,
The lads & the lasses a-sheep-shearing go."

Tree arrived Hardy sent it on to Tinsley without looking at it, saying he would have nothing to do with any publishing accounts. This probably was the reason why Tinsley offered him £30 for the copyright, which Hardy accepted. It should be added that Tinsley afterwards sent him £10 extra, and quite voluntarily, being, he said, half the amount he had obtained from Tauchnitz for the Continental copyright, of which transaction Hardy had known nothing.

Hardy's indifference in selling *Under the Greenwood Tree* for a trifle could not have been because he still had altogether other aims than the literature of fiction, as had been the case in the previous winter; for he casually mentioned to Tinsley that he thought of going on with the three-volumed novel before alluded to. Moule's words on keeping a hand on the pen, and the specks in his eyes while drawing, may have influenced him in this harking back.

In the early part of May he was correcting the proofs of the rural story. It was mostly done late at night, at Westbourne Park, where he was again living, the day being occupied with the competition-drawings for Board schools in the various London districts—and some occasional evenings in preparing drawings for Blomfield, with whom Hardy was in frequent and friendly touch—though he told Blomfield at that time nothing about his adventures as a novel-writer.

Under the Greenwood Tree was published about the last week in May (1872) and met with a very kindly and gentle reception, being reviewed in the *Athenæum* as a book which could induce people "to give up valuable time to see a marriage accomplished in its pages", and in the *Pall Mall Gazette* as a story of much freshness and originality.

As its author was at Bedford Chambers in Bedford Street—Professor Smith's offices—every day, and the

office of the publishers was only a street or two further along the Strand, he was not infrequently encountering Tinsley, who one day asked him—the book continuing to receive good notices—for how much he would write a story for *Tinsley's Magazine*, to run a twelvemonth, the question being probably prompted by this tone of the press towards *Under the Greenwood Tree*.

Hardy reflected on the outlined novel he had abandoned—considered that he could do it in six months—but “to guard against temptation” (as he put it) multiplied by two the utmost he could expect to make at architecture in the time, and told his inquirer the sum.

“All right, all right, Mr. Hardy—very reasonable,” said the friendly publisher, smacking Hardy’s shoulder. “Now come along into the office here, and we’ll sign the agreement, and the job will be off our minds.”

Hardy, however, for some reason or other was growing wary, and said he would call next day. During the afternoon he went to a law-bookseller, bought *Copinger on Copyright*, the only book on the subject he could meet with, and sat up half the night studying it. Next day he called on Tinsley, and said he would write the story for the sum mentioned, it being understood that the amount paid was for the magazine-issue solely, after which publication all rights were to return to the author.

“Well, I’m damned!” Tinsley said, with a grim laugh. “Who the devil have you been talking to, Mr. Hardy, if I may ask, since I saw you yesterday?”

Hardy said “Nobody”. (Which was true, though only literally.)

“Well, but—Now, Mr. Hardy, you are hard, very hard upon me! However, I do like your writings: and if you’ll throw in the three-volume edition of the novel with the magazine rights I’ll agree.”

Hardy assented to this, having, as he used to say, some liking for Tinsley’s keen sense of humour even when it

went against himself ; and the business was settled shortly after, the author agreeing to be ready with the first monthly part of his story for the magazine soon enough to give an artist time to prepare an illustration for it, and enable it to be printed in the September number, which in the case of this periodical came out on August 15.

It was now the 24th July, and walking back towards Professor Roger Smith's chambers Hardy began to feel that he had done rather a rash thing. He knew but vaguely the value of a three-volume edition, and as to the story, he had as already mentioned thought of a possible one some time before, roughly noted down the opening chapters and general outline, and then abandoned it with the rest of his literary schemes. He had never written a serial narrative and had no journalistic experience ; and he was pledged to the Board-school drawings for at least another week, when they were to be sent in to the Committee. Nevertheless, having promised Tinsley, he resolved to stick to his promise, and on the 27th July agreed by letter.

Apparently without saying anything of his new^r commitment, he informed the genial Professor of Architecture that he thought he would take a holiday in August, when there would be little more of a pressing nature to do for that year ; and going home to Westbourne Park wrote between then and midnight the first chapter or two of *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. Even though he may have thought over and roughly set down the beginning of the romance, the writing it out connectedly must have been done very rapidly, despite the physical enervation that London always brought upon him. (It may be noticed that he gave the youth who appears first in the novel the surname of the Professor of Architecture he had been assisting.) At any rate the MS. of the first number, with something over, was ready for the illustrator in an incredibly quick time. Thereupon, though he had shaped nothing of what the later chapters were to be like, he dismissed the subject as

Sheridan dismissed a bill he had backed, and on August 7 went on board the *Avoca*, of the Irish Mail Packet Company (a boat, which, by the way, went to the bottom shortly after), at London Bridge, to proceed to Cornwall by water.

In Cornwall he paid a visit to some friends—Captain and Mrs. Serjeant, of St. Benet's Abbey, who owned valuable china-clay works near, which were just then being developed; drove to St. Juliot, and met there among other visitors Miss d'Arville, a delightful old lady from Bath, who had a canary that fainted and fell to the bottom of the cage whenever a cat came into the room, or the picture of a cat was shown it. He walked to Tintagel Castle and sketched there a stone altar, having an Early-English ornamentation on its edge; which altar in after years he could never find; and in the intervals of this and other excursions went on with his MS., having naturally enough received an urgent letter for more copy from the publisher. He returned to London by way of Bath, where he left Miss d'Arville, who had accompanied him thus far.

He could not, however, get on with his novel in London, and late in September went down to the seclusion of Dorset to set about it more thoroughly. On this day *Under the Greenwood Tree* was reviewed by Moule in the *Saturday*. The *Spectator*, however, which had so mauled *Desperate Remedies*, took little notice of the book.

An entry in the diary at this time was: "Sept. 30. Posted MS. of *A Pair of Blue Eyes* to Tinsley up to Page 163."

Before the date was reached he had received a letter from Professor Roger Smith, informing him that another of the six Board-school competitions for which Hardy had helped him to prepare designs had been successful, and suggesting that he had "been at grass" long enough, and would be welcomed back on any more liberal terms, if he felt dissatisfied.

This architectural success, for which he would have given much had it come sooner, was now merely provoking. However, Hardy confessed to the surprised and amused Smith what he had been doing, and was still occupied with; and thus was severed to his great regret an extremely pleasant if short professional connection with an able and amiable man; though their friendship was not broken, being renewed from time to time, and continued till the death of the elder of them.

Till the end of the year he was at Bockhampton finishing *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, the action of which, as is known, proceeds on the coast near "Lyonnesse"—not far from King Arthur's Castle at Tintagel. Its scene, he said, would have been clearly indicated by calling the romance *Elfride of Lyonnesse*, but for a wish to avoid drawing attention to the neighbouring St. Juliot while his friends were living there. After a flying visit to the Rectory, he remained on through the spring at his mother's; and it may be mentioned here that while staying at this place or at the Rectory or possibly in London, Hardy received an account of the death of "The Tranter", after whom the character in *Under the Greenwood Tree* had been called, though it was not a portrait, nor was the fictitious tranter's kinship to the other musicians based on fact. He had been the many years' neighbour of the Hardys, and did the haulage of building materials for Hardy's father, of whom he also rented a field for his horses. The scene of his last moments was detailed in a letter to Hardy by one present at his death-bedside:

"He was quite in his senses, but not able to speak. A dark purple stain began in his leg that was injured many years ago by his waggon going over it; the stain ran up it about as fast as a fly walks. It ran up his body in the same way till, arriving level with his fingers, it began in them, and went on up his arms, up his neck and face, to the top of his head, when he breathed his last. Then a pure white

began at his foot, and went upwards at the same rate, and in the same way, and he became as white throughout as he had been purple a minute before."

In this connection it may be interesting to add that the actual name of the shoemaker "Robert Penny" in the same story was Robert Reason. He, like the Tranter and the Tranter's wife, is buried in Stinsford Churchyard near the tombs of the Hardys, though his name is almost illegible. Hardy once said he would much have preferred to use the real name, as being better suited to the character, but thought at the time of writing that there were possible relatives who might be hurt by the use of it, though he afterwards found there were none. The only real name in the story is that of "Voss", who brought the hot mead and viands to the choir on their rounds. It can still be read on a headstone, also quite near to where the Hardys lie. It will be remembered that these headstones are alluded to in the poem entitled "The Dead Quire"—

There Dewy lay by the gaunt yew tree,
There Reuben and Michael, a pace behind,
And Bowman with his family
By the wall that the ivies bind.

Old Dewy has been called a portrait of Hardy's grandfather, but this was not the case; he died three years before the birth of the story-teller, almost in his prime, and long ere reaching the supposed age of William Dewy. There was, in fact, no family portrait in the tale.

A Pair of Blue Eyes was published in three volumes the latter part of May.

"May 5. 'Maniel' [Immanuel] Riggs found dead. [A shepherd Hardy knew.] A curious man, who used to moisten his lips between every two or three words."

"June 9. 1873. To London. Went to French Plays. Saw Brasseur, etc."

"June 15. Met H. M. Moule at the Golden Cross

Hotel. Dined with him at the British Hotel. Moule then left for Ipswich on his duties as Poor Law Inspector."

"June 16-20. About London with my brother Henry."

"June 20. By evening train to Cambridge. Stayed in College—Queens'—Went out with H. M. M. after dinner. A magnificent evening: sun over 'the Backs'."

"Next morning went with H. M. M. to King's Chapel early. M. opened the great West doors to show the interior vista: we got upon the roof, where we could see Ely Cathedral gleaming in the distant sunlight. A never-to-be-forgotten morning. H. M. M. saw me off for London. His last smile."

From London Hardy travelled on to Bath, arriving late at night and putting up at 8 Great Stanhope Street, where lodgings had been obtained for him by his warm-hearted friend Miss d'Arville, whom Miss Gifford was then visiting. The following dates are from the intermittent diary Hardy kept in these years.

"June 23. Excursions about Bath and Bristol with the ladies."

"June 28. To Clifton with Miss Gifford."—Where they were surprised by accidentally seeing in a news-agent's shop a commendatory review of *A Pair of Blue Eyes* in the *Spectator*.

"June 30. About Bath alone. . . . Bath has a rural complexion on an urban substance. . . ."

"July 1. A day's trip with Miss G. To Chepstow, the Wye, the Wynd Cliff, which we climbed, and Tintern, where we repeated some of Wordsworth's lines thereon.

"At Tintern, silence is part of the pile. Destroy that, and you take a limb from an organism. . . . A wooded slope visible from every unmulioned window. But compare the age of the building with that of the marble hills from which it was drawn! . . ."

Here may be stated, in relation to the above words on the age of the hills, that this shortcoming of the most

ancient architecture by comparison with geology was a consideration that frequently troubled Hardy's mind when measuring and drawing old Norman and other early buildings, just as it had been troubled by "The Wolf" in his musical tuning, and by the thought that Greek literature had been at the mercy of dialects.

"July 2. Bath to Dorchester."

CHAPTER VII

"FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD," MARRIAGE, AND ANOTHER NOVEL

1873-1876: *Act.* 33-36

SOME half-year before this, in December 1872, Hardy had received at Bockhampton a letter from Leslie Stephen, the editor of the *Cornhill*—by that time well known as a man of letters, *Saturday* reviewer, and Alpine climber—asking for a serial story for his magazine. He had lately read *Under the Greenwood Tree*, and thought "the descriptions admirable". It was "long since he had received more pleasure from a new writer", and it had occurred to him that such writing would probably please the readers of the *Cornhill Magazine* as much as it had pleased him.

Hardy had replied that he feared the date at which he could write a story for the *Cornhill* would be too late for Mr. Stephen's purpose, since he already had on hand a succeeding novel (*i.e.* *A Pair of Blue Eyes*), which was arranged for; but that the next after should be at Mr. Stephen's disposal. He had thought of making it a pastoral tale with the title of *Far from the Madding Crowd*—and that the chief characters would probably be a young woman-farmer, a shepherd, and a sergeant of cavalry. That was all he had done. Mr. Stephen had rejoined that he was sorry he could not expect a story from Hardy at an earlier date; that he did not, however, mean to fix any particular time; that the idea of the story attracted him; also the proposed title; and that he would like Hardy to

call and talk it over when he came to Town. There the matter had been left. Now Hardy set about the pastoral tale, the success of *A Pair of Blue Eyes* meanwhile surpassing his expectations, the influential *Saturday Review* pronouncing it to be the most artistically constructed of the novels of its time—a quality which, by the bye, would carry little recommendation in these days of loose construction and indifference to organic homogeneity.

But Hardy did not call on Stephen just then.

It was, indeed, by the merest chance that he had ever got the *Cornhill* letter at all. The postal arrangements in Dorset were still so primitive at this date that the only delivery of letters at Hardy's father's house was by the hand of some friendly neighbour who had come from the next village, and Stephen's request for a story had been picked up in the mud of the lane by a labouring man, the school children to whom it had been entrusted having dropped it on the way.

While thus in the seclusion of Bockhampton, writing *Far from the Madding Crowd*, we find him on September 21, walking to Woodbury-Hill Fair, approximately described in the novel as "Greenhill Fair". On the 24th he was shocked at hearing of the tragic death of his friend Horace Moule, from whom he had parted cheerfully at Cambridge in June. The body was brought to be buried at Fordington, Dorchester, and Hardy attended the funeral. It was a matter of keen regret to him now, and for a long time after, that Moule and the woman to whom Hardy was warmly attached had never set eyes on each other; and that she could never make Moule's acquaintance, or be his friend.

On the 30th of September he sent to Leslie Stephen at his request as much of the MS. of *Far from the Madding Crowd* as was written—apparently between two and three monthly parts, though some of it only in rough outline—and a few days after a letter came from Stephen stating

that the story suited him admirably as far as it had gone, and that though as a rule it was desirable to see the whole of a novel before definitely accepting it, under the circumstances he decided to accept it at once.

So Hardy went on writing *Far from the Madding Crowd*—sometimes indoors, sometimes out—when he would occasionally find himself without a scrap of paper at the very moment that he felt volumes. In such circumstances he would use large dead leaves, white chips left by the wood-cutters, or pieces of stone or slate that came to hand. He used to say that when he carried a pocket-book his mind was barren as the Sahara.

This autumn Hardy assisted at his father's cider-making—a proceeding he had always enjoyed from childhood—the apples being from huge old trees that have now long perished. It was the last time he ever took part in a work whose sweet smells and ooziings in the crisp autumn air can never be forgotten by those who have had a hand in it.

Memorandum by T. H.

“Met J. D., one of the old Mellstock fiddlers—who kept me talking interminably : a man who speaks neither truth nor lies, but a sort of Not Proven compound which is very relishable. Told me of Jack ——, who spent all the money he had—sixpence—at the Oak Inn, took his sixpence out of the till when the landlady's back was turned, and spent it over again ; then stole it again, and again spent it, till he had had a real skinful. ‘Was too honest to take any money but his own’, said J. D.” (Some of J. D.'s characteristics appear in “the Tranter” of *Under the Greenwood Tree*.)

At the end of October an unexpected note from the *Cornhill* editor asked if, supposing he were to start *Far from the Madding Crowd* in the January number (which would be out the third week in December) instead of the spring, as intended, Hardy could keep in front of the printers with his copy. He learnt afterwards that what had happened

was that the MS. of a novel which the editor had arranged to begin in his pages in January had been lost in the post, according, at any rate, to its author's account. Hardy thought January not too soon for him, and that he could keep the printers going. Terms were consequently arranged with the publishers and proofs of the first number sent forthwith, Hardy incidentally expressing with regard to any illustrations, in a letter of October 1873, "a hope that the rustics, although *quaint*, may be made to appear intelligent, and not boorish at all"; adding in a later letter: "In reference to the illustrations, I have sketched in my note-book during the past summer a few correct outlines of smockfrocks, gaiters, sheep-crooks, rick-'staddles', a sheep-washing pool, one of the old-fashioned malt-houses, and some other out-of-the-way things that might have to be shown. These I could send you if they would be of any use to the artist, but if he is a sensitive man and you think he would rather not be interfered with, I would not do so."

No response had been made to this, and he was not quite clear whether, after all, Leslie Stephen had finally decided to begin so soon when, returning from Cornwall on a fine December noontide (being New Year's Eve 1873-74), he opened on Plymouth Hoe a copy of the *Cornhill* that he had bought at the station, and there to his surprise saw his story placed at the beginning of the magazine, with a striking illustration, the artist being—also to his surprise—not a man but a woman, Miss Helen Paterson. He had only expected from the undistinguished rank of the characters in the tale that it would be put at the end, and possibly without a picture. Why this had come without warning to him was owing to the accident of his being away from his permanent address for several days, and nothing having been forwarded. It can be imagined how delighted Miss Gifford was to receive the first number of the story, whose nature he had kept from

her to give her a pleasant surprise, and to find that her desire of a literary course for Hardy was in fair way of being justified.

In the first week of January 1874 the story was noticed in a marked degree by the *Spectator*, and a guess hazarded that it might be from the pen of George Eliot—why, the author could never understand, since, so far as he had read that great thinker—one of the greatest living, he thought, though not a born storyteller by any means—she had never touched the life of the fields: her country-people having seemed to him, too, more like small townsfolk than rustics; and as evidencing a woman's wit cast in country dialogue rather than real country humour, which he regarded as rather of the Shakespeare and Fielding sort. However, he conjectured, as a possible reason for the flattering guess, that he had latterly been reading Comte's *Positive Philosophy*, and writings of that school, some of whose expressions had thus passed into his vocabulary, expressions which were also common to George Eliot. Leslie Stephen wrote:

"I am glad to congratulate you on the reception of your first number. Besides the gentle *Spectator*, which thinks that you must be George Eliot because you know the names of the stars, several good judges have spoken to me warmly of the *Madding Crowd*. Moreover the *Spectator*, though flighty in its head, has really a good deal of critical feeling. I always like to be praised by it—and indeed by other people! . . . The story comes out very well, I think, and I have no criticism to make."

Respecting the public interest in the opening of the story, in later days Miss Thackeray informed him, with some of her father's humour, that to inquiries with which she was besieged on the sex of the author, and requests to be given an introduction to him or her, she would reply: "*It* lives in the country, and I could not very well introduce you to *it* in Town."

A passage may be quoted here from Mr. F. W. Maitland's *Life of Leslie Stephen* (to which Hardy contributed half a chapter or so, on Stephen as editor) which affords a humorous illustration of the difficulties of "serial" writing in Victorian days. Stephen had written to say that the seduction of Fanny Robin must be treated in "a gingerly fashion", adding that it was owing to an "excessive prudery of which I am ashamed".

"I wondered what had so suddenly caused, in one who had seemed anything but a prude, the 'excessive prudery' alluded to. But I did not learn till I saw him in April. Then he told me that an unexpected Grundian cloud, though no bigger than a man's hand as yet, had appeared on our serene horizon. Three respectable ladies and subscribers, representing he knew not how many more, had written to upbraid him for an improper passage in a page of the story which had already been published.

"I was struck mute, till I said, 'Well, if you value the opinion of such people, why didn't you think of them beforehand, and strike out the passage?'—'I ought to have, since it is their opinion, whether I value it or no', he said with a half groan. 'But it didn't occur to me that there was anything to object to!' I reminded him that though three objectors who disliked the passage, or pretended to, might write their disapproval, three hundred who possibly approved of it would not take the trouble to write, and hence he might have a false impression of the public as a body. 'Yes; I agree. Still I suppose I ought to have foreseen these gentry, and have omitted it,' he murmured.

"It may be added here, to finish with this detail (though it anticipates dates), that when the novel came out in volume form *The Times* quoted in a commendatory review the very passage that had offended. As soon as I met him, I said, 'You see what *The Times* says about that paragraph; and you cannot say that *The Times* is not respectable.' He was smoking and answered tardily: 'No,

I can't say that *The Times* is not respectable.' I then urged that if he had omitted the sentences, as he had wished he had done, I should never have taken the trouble to restore them in the reprint, and *The Times* could not have quoted them with approbation. I suppose my manner was slightly triumphant; at any rate, he said, 'I spoke as an editor, not as a man. You have no more consciousness of these things than a child.'"

To go back for a moment. Having attracted so much attention Hardy now again withdrew into retreat at Bockhampton to get ahead with the novel, which was in a lamentably unadvanced condition, writing to Stephen, when requesting that the proofs might be sent to that hermitage: "I have decided to finish it here, which is within a walk of the district in which the incidents are supposed to occur. I find it a great advantage to be actually among the people described at the time of describing them."

However, that he did not care much for a reputation as a novelist in lieu of being able to follow the pursuit of poetry—now for ever hindered, as it seemed—becomes obvious from a remark written to Mr. Stephen about this time:

"The truth is that I am willing, and indeed anxious, to give up any points which may be desirable in a story when read as a whole, for the sake of others which shall please those who read it in numbers. Perhaps I may have higher aims some day, and be a great stickler for the proper artistic balance of the completed work, but for the present circumstances lead me to wish merely to be considered a good hand at a serial."

The fact was that at this date he was bent on carrying out later in the year an intention beside which a high repute as an artistic novelist loomed even less importantly than in ordinary—an intention to be presently mentioned.

He found he had drifted anew into a position he had

vowed after his past experience he would in future keep clear of—that of having unfinished on his hands a novel of which the beginning was already before the public, and so having to write against time. He wrote so rapidly in fact that by February he was able to send the editor an instalment of copy sufficient for two or three months further, and another instalment in April.

On a visit to London in the winter Hardy had made the personal acquaintance of Leslie Stephen, the man whose philosophy was to influence his own for many years, indeed, more than that of any other contemporary, and received a welcome in his household, which was renewed from time to time, whereby he became acquainted with Mrs. Stephen and her sister Miss Thackeray. He also made acquaintance with Mr. G. Murray Smith, the publisher, and his family in April. At dinner there in May he met his skilful illustrator, Miss Helen Paterson, and gave her a few points; Mr. Frederick Greenwood; and Mrs. Procter, wife and soon after widow of "Barry Cornwall" the poet. The enormous acquaintance of Mrs. Procter with past celebrities was astonishing, and her humour in relating anecdotes of them charmed Hardy. She used to tell him that sometimes after avowing to Americans her acquaintance with a long list of famous bygone people, she had been compelled to deny knowledge of certain others she had equally well known, to re-establish her listener's wavering faith in her veracity.

Back again in Dorsetshire he continued his application to the story, and by July had written it all, the last few chapters having been done at a gallop, for a reason to be told directly. In the middle of the month he resumed residence in London, where he hurriedly corrected the concluding pages and posted the end of the MS. to the editor early in August.

The next month Thomas Hardy and Miss Emma Lavinia Gifford were married at St. Peter's, Elgin Avenue,

Paddington, by her uncle Dr. E. Hamilton Gifford, Canon of Worcester, and afterwards Archdeacon of London. In the November following *Far from the Madding Crowd* was published in two volumes, with the illustrations by Miss Helen Paterson, who by an odd coincidence had also thought fit to marry William Allingham during the progress of the story. It may be said in passing that the development of the chapters month by month had brought these lines from Mrs. Procter:

"You would be gratified to know what a shock the marriage of Bathsheba was. I resembled Mr. Boldwood—and to deceive such an old novel-reader as myself is a triumph. We are always looking out for traps, and scent a long way off a surprise. . . .

"I hear that you are coming to live in stony-hearted London. Our great fault is that we are all alike. . . . We press so closely against each other that any small shoots are cut off at once, and the young tree grows in shape like the old one."

When the book appeared complete the author and his wife, after a short visit to the Continent—their first Continental days having been spent at Rouen,—had temporarily gone to live at Surbiton, and remained there for a considerable time without nearly realizing the full extent of the interest that had been excited among the reading public by the novel, which unsophistication was only partially removed by their seeing with unusual frequency, during their journeys to and from London, ladies carrying about copies of it with Mudie's label on the covers.

Meanwhile Mr. George Smith, head of the firm of Smith and Elder—a man of wide experience, who had brought Charlotte Brontë before the reading public, and who became a disinterested friend of Hardy's—suggested to him that he should if possible get back the copyright of *Under the Greenwood Tree*, which he had sold to Tinsley Brothers for £30. Tinsley at first replied that he would

not return it for any sum: then that he would sell it for £300. Hardy offered half, which offer Tinsley did not respond to, and there the matter dropped.

Among the curious consequences of the popularity of *Far from the Madding Crowd* was a letter from the lady he had so admired as a child, when she was the *grande dame* of the parish in which he was born. He had seen her only once since—at her town-house in Bruton Street as aforesaid. But it should be stated in justice to her that her writing was not merely a rekindled interest on account of his book's popularity, for she had written to him in his obscurity, before he had published a line, asking him to come and see her, and addressing him as her dear Tommy, as when he was a small boy, apologizing for doing so on the ground that she could not help it. She was now quite an elderly lady, but by signing her letter "Julia Augusta" she revived throbs of tender feeling in him, and brought back to his memory the thrilling "frou-frou" of her four grey silk flounces when she used to bend over him, and when they brushed against the font as she entered church on Sundays. He replied, but, as it appears, did not go to see her.

Meanwhile the more tangible result of the demand for *Far from the Madding Crowd* was an immediate request from the editor and publishers of the *Cornhill* for another story, which should begin as early as possible in 1875.

This was the means of urging Hardy into the unfortunate course of hurrying forward a further production before he was aware of what there had been of value in his previous one: before learning, that is, not only what had attracted the public, but what was of true and genuine substance on which to build a career as a writer with a real literary message. For mere popularity he cared little, as little as he did for large payments; but having now to live by the pen—or, as he would quote, "to keep base life

afoot"—he had to consider popularity. This request for more of his writing not only from the *Cornhill* but from other quarters coincided with quizzing personal gossip, among other paragraphs being one that novel-writing was coming to a pretty pass, the author of *Lorna Doone* having avowed himself a market-gardener, and the author of *Far from the Madding Crowd* having been discovered to be a house-decorator (!). Criticism like this influenced him to put aside a woodland story he had thought of (which later took shape in *The Woodlanders*), and make a plunge in a new and untried direction. He was aware of the pecuniary value of a reputation for a speciality; and as above stated, the acquisition of something like a regular income had become important. Yet he had not the slightest intention of writing for ever about sheepfarming, as the reading public was apparently expecting him to do, and as, in fact, they presently resented his not doing. Hence, to the consternation of his editor and publishers, in March he sent up as a response to their requests the beginning of a tale called *The Hand of Ethelberta—A Comedy in Chapters* which had nothing whatever in common with anything he had written before.

In March he went to the Oxford and Cambridge Boat-Race, and entered rooms taken in Newton Road, Westbourne Grove, a light being thrown on the domestic and practical side of his life at this time by the following:

"NEWTON ROAD, WESTBOURNE GROVE,
March 19, 1875.

"Messrs Townly and Bonniwell,
Surbiton,

"Gentlemen: Please to warehouse the cases and boxes sent herewith, and numbered as follows:

"No. 1. Size 3 ft. 6 ins. $\times$ 2 ft. 6 ins. $\times$ 2 ft. 2 ins., containing linen and books.

"No. 2. Size 2 ft. 0 ins. $\times$ 1 ft. 9 ins. $\times$ 1 ft. 7½ ins. containing books.

“No. 3. Size 2 ft. 0 ins. $\times$ 1 ft. 4 ins. $\times$ 1 ft. 2 ins. containing books.

“No. 4. Size 1 ft. 5 ins. $\times$ 1 ft. 0 ins. $\times$ 1 ft. 0 ins. containing sundries.

“A receipt for same will oblige.”

Their entire worldly goods were contained in this small compass.

The next three months were spent at the address given above, where they followed an ordinary round of museum, theatre, and concert-going, with some dining-out, in keeping with what he had written earlier to Mr. George Smith: “We are coming to Town for three months on account of Ethelberta, some London scenes occurring in her chequered career which I want to do as vigorously as possible—having already visited Rouen and Paris with the same object, other adventures of hers taking place there.” He also asked Smith’s advice on a German translation of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, which had been asked for.

The *Comedy in Chapters*, despite its departure from a path desired by his new-found readers, and to some extent desired by himself, was accepted for the magazine. The beginning appeared in the *Cornhill* for May, when Hardy had at last the satisfaction of proving, amid the general disappointment at the lack of sheep and shepherds, that he did not mean to imitate anybody, whatever the satisfaction might have been worth. The sub-title did not appear in the magazine, Mr. Stephen having written in respect of it:

“I am sorry to have to bother you about a trifle! I fully approved of your suggestion for adding to ‘Ethelberta’s Hand’ the descriptive title ‘A Comedy in Chapters’. I find however from other people that it gives rather an unfortunate idea. They understand by Comedy something of the farce description, and expect you to be

funny after the fashion of Mr. —, or some professional joker. This, of course, is stupid ; but then, advertisements are meant for stupid people. The question is, unluckily, not what they ought to feel but what they do feel. . . . I think, therefore, that if you have no strong reason to the contrary it will be better to drop the second title for the present. When the book is reprinted it can of course appear, because then the illusion would be immediately dispelled."

One reflection about himself at this date sometimes made Hardy uneasy. He perceived that he was "up against" the position of having to carry on his life not as an emotion, but as a scientific game ; that he was committed by circumstances to novel-writing as a regular trade, as much as he had formerly been to architecture ; and that hence he would, he deemed, have to look for material in manners—in ordinary social and fashionable life as other novelists did. Yet he took no interest in manners, but in the substance of life only. So far what he had written had not been novels at all, as usually understood—that is pictures of modern customs and observances—and might not long sustain the interest of the circulating library subscriber who cared mainly for those things. On the other hand, to go about to dinners and clubs and crushes as a business was not much to his mind. Yet that was necessary meat and drink to the popular author. Not that he was unsociable, but events and long habit had accustomed him to solitary living. So it was also with his wife, of whom he wrote later, in the poem entitled "A Dream or No" :

Lonely I found her,
The sea-birds around her,
And other than nigh things uncaring to know.

He mentioned this doubt of himself one day to Miss Thackeray, who confirmed his gloomy misgivings by

saying with surprise: "Certainly; a novelist must necessarily like society!"

Another incident which added to his dubiety was the arrival of a letter from Coventry Patmore, a total stranger to him, expressing the view that *A Pair of Blue Eyes* was in its nature not a conception for prose, and that he "regretted at almost every page that such unequalled beauty and power should not have assured themselves the immortality which would have been impressed upon them by the form of verse". Hardy was much struck by this opinion from Patmore. However, finding himself committed to prose, he renewed his consideration of a prose style, as it is evident from the following note:

"Read again Addison, Macaulay, Newman, Sterne, Defoe, Lamb, Gibbon, Burke, Times Leaders, etc., in a study of style. Am more and more confirmed in an idea I have long held, as a matter of commonsense, long before I thought of any old aphorism bearing on the subject: 'Ars est celare artem'. The whole secret of a living style and the difference between it and a dead style, lies in not having too much style—being—in fact, a little careless, or rather seeming to be, here and there. It brings wonderful life into the writing:

"A sweet disorder in the dress . . .
A careless shoe-string, in whose tie
I see a wild civility,
Do more bewitch me than when art
Is too precise in every part.

"Otherwise your style is like worn half-pence—all the fresh images rounded off by rubbing, and no crispness or movement at all.

"It is, of course, simply a carrying into prose the knowledge I have acquired in poetry—that inexact rhymes and rhythms now and then are far more pleasing than correct ones."

About the time at which the Hardys were leaving Surbiton for Newton Road occurred an incident, which can best be described by quoting Hardy's own account of it as printed in Mr. F. W. Maitland's *Life of Leslie Stephen*:

"One day (March 23, 1875) I received from Stephen a mysterious note asking me to call in the evening, as late as I liked. I went, and found him alone, wandering up and down his library in slippers; his tall thin figure wrapt in a heath-coloured dressing-gown. After a few remarks on our magazine arrangements he said he wanted me to witness his signature to what, for a moment, I thought was his will; but it turned out to be a deed renunciatory of holy-orders under the act of 1870. He said grimly that he was really a reverend gentleman still, little as he might look it, and that he thought it was as well to cut himself adrift of a calling for which, to say the least, he had always been utterly unfit. The deed was executed with due formality. Our conversation then turned upon theologies decayed and defunct, the origin of things, the constitution of matter, the unreality of time, and kindred subjects. He told me that he had 'wasted' much time on systems of religion and metaphysics, and that the new theory of vortex rings had 'a staggering fascination' for him."

On this description the editor of the *Life*, Mr. Maitland, remarks: "This scene—I need not say it—is well drawn. A tall thin figure wrapt in a heath-coloured dressing-gown was what one saw if one climbed to that Stylites study at dead of night."

In May Hardy formed one of a deputation to Mr. Disraeli in support of a motion for a Select Committee to inquire into the state of Copyright Law; and on Waterloo Day he and his wife went to Chelsea Hospital—it being the 60th anniversary of the battle—and made acquaintance with the Waterloo men still surviving there. Hardy would

tell that one of these—a delightful old campaigner named John Bentley whom he knew to the last—put his arm round Mrs. Hardy's waist, and interlarded his discourse with "my dear young woman", while he described to her his experiences of that memorable day, one rather incisive touch in his tale to her being that through the haze of smoke all that could be discerned was "anything that shined", such as bayonets, helmets, and swords. The wet eve of the battle, when they slept in the rain with nothing over them, he spoke of as "last night", as if he were speaking on the actual day. Another experience he related to her was a love-affair. While quartered in Brussels he had a sweetheart. When ordered to advance to Waterloo her friends offered to hide him if he would desert, as the French were sure to win. He refused, urging the oath he had taken; but he felt strongly tempted, as she was very fond of him, and he of her. She begged him to write, if he lived through the campaign, and to be sure to get a Belgian or Frenchman to direct the letter, or it might not find her. After the battle, and when he was in Paris he did write, and received an answer, saying she would come to Paris and meet him on Christmas Day at 3 o'clock. His regiment had received orders to march before that time, and at Christmas he was—Mrs. Hardy forgot where. But he thought of her, and wondered if she came. "Yes, you see, 'twas God's will we should meet no more", said Bentley, speaking of her with peculiar tenderness.

In this same month of 1875, it may be interesting to note, occurs the first mention in Hardy's memoranda of the idea of an epic on the war with Napoleon—carried out so many years later in *The Dynasts*. This earliest note runs as follows:

"Mem: A Ballad of the Hundred Days. Then another of Moscow. Others of earlier campaigns—forming altogether an Iliad of Europe from 1789 to 1815."

That Hardy, however, was endeavouring to live practically at this time, as well as imaginatively, is shown by an entry immediately following:

"House at Childe-Okeford, Dorset. To be sold by auction June 10"; and by his starting on the 22nd for a day or two in Dorsetshire house-hunting, first visiting Shaftesbury, where he found a cottage for £25 a year, that did not, however, suit; thence to Blandford, and thence to Wimborne, where on arrival he entered the Minster at ten at night, having seen a light within, and sat in a stall listening to the organist practising, while the rays from the musician's solitary candle streamed across the arcades. This incident seems to have inclined him to Wimborne; but he did not go there yet.

In July the couple went to Bournemouth, and thence by steamer to Swanage, where they found lodgings at the house of an invalided captain of smacks and ketches; and Hardy, suspending his house-hunting, settled down there for the autumn and winter to finish *The Hand of Ethelberta*.

While completing it he published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* a ballad he had written nine or ten years earlier during his time with Blomfield, called "The Fire at Tranter Sweatley's" (and in some editions "The Bride-night Fire")—which, as with his other verses, he had been unable to get into print at the date of its composition by the rather perfunctory efforts he made.

"Nov. 28. I sit under a tree, and feel alone: I think of certain insects around me as magnified by the microscope: creatures like elephants, flying dragons, etc. And I feel I am by no means alone.

"29. He has read well who has learnt that there is more to read outside books than in them."

Their landlord, the "captain", used to tell them, as sailors will, strange stories of his sea-farings; mostly smuggling stories—one of them Hardy always remembered

because of its odd development. The narrator was in a fishing-boat going to meet a French lugger half-Channel-over, to receive spirit-tubs and land them. He and his mates were some nine miles off Portland, which was the limit allowed, when they were sighted by the revenue-cutter. Seeing the cutter coming up, they said "We must act as if we were fishing for mackerel". But they had no bait, and the ruse would be discovered. They snapped up the stems of their tobacco-pipes, and unfastening the hook from a line they had with them slipped on the bits of tobacco-pipe above the shank. The officers came—saw them fishing, and merely observing that they were a long way from shore, and dubiously asking why, and being innocently told because the fish were there, left them. Then, as if the bait had been genuine, to their surprise, on pulling up the sham line they began to haul in mackerel. The fish had made their deception truth.

Masters also told them that when persons are drowned in a high sea in the West (or Deadman's) Bay, "the sea undresses them"—mauling off their clothes and leaving them naked.

While here at Swanage they walked daily on the cliffs and shore, Hardy noting thereon :

"Evening. Just after sunset. Sitting with E. on a stone under the wall before the Refreshment Cottage. The sounds are two, and only two. On the left Durlstone Head roaring high and low, like a giant asleep. On the right a thrush. Above the bird hangs the new moon, and a steady planet."

In the same winter of 1875 an article appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* on *Far from the Madding Crowd* entitled "Le roman pastoral en Angleterre".

Ethelberta was finished in the January of the next year (1876) and the MS. dispatched. Pending the appearance of the story in volumes the twain removed in March to lodgings at Yeovil to facilitate their search for a little dwelling.

Here they were living when the novel was published. It was received in a friendly spirit and even with admiration in some quarters—more, indeed, than Hardy had expected—one experienced critic going so far as to write that it was the finest ideal comedy since the days of Shakespeare. “Show me the lady in the flesh”, he said in a letter to the author, “and I vow on my honour as a bachelor to become a humble addition to her devoted train.” It did not, however, win the cordiality that had greeted its two fore-runners, the chief objection seeming to be that it was “impossible”. It was, in fact, thirty years too soon for a Comedy of Society of that kind—just as *The Poor Man and the Lady* had been too soon for a socialist story, and as other of his writings—in prose and verse—were too soon for their date. The most impossible situation in it was said to be that of the heroine sitting at table at a dinner-party of “the best people”, at which her father was present by the sideboard as butler. Yet a similar situation has been applauded in a play in recent years by Mr. Bernard Shaw, without any sense of improbability.

This ended Hardy’s connection with Leslie Stephen as editor, though not as friend; and in the course of a letter expressing a hope that it might be renewed, Stephen wrote (May 16, 1876):

“My remark about modern lectures [?] was of course, ‘wrote sarcastic’, as Artemus Ward says, and intended for a passing dig in the ribs of some modern critics, who think that they can lay down laws in art like the pope in religion; e.g., the whole Rossetti-Swinburne school—I think as a critic, that the less authors read of criticism the better. You, e.g., have a perfectly fresh and original vein, and I think the less you bother yourself about critical canons the less chance there is of your becoming self-conscious and cramped. . . . Ste. Beuve, and Mat Arnold (in a smaller way), are the only modern critics who seem to me worth reading. . . . We are generally a poor lot, horribly

afraid of not being in the fashion, and disposed to give ourselves airs on very small grounds."

"*May*. In an orchard at Closeworth. Cowslips under trees. A light proceeds from them, as from Chinese lanterns or glow-worms."

CHAPTER VIII

HOLLAND, THE RHINE, AND STURMINSTER NEWTON

1876-1878: *Act.* 36-37

FROM their lodgings in Yeovil they set out at the end of May for Holland and the Rhine—the first thing that struck them being that “the Dutch seemed like police perpetually keeping back an unruly crowd composed of waves”. They visited Rotterdam—“looking over-clean and new, with not enough shadow, and with houses nearly all out of the perpendicular”; then the Hague, Scheveningen, Emmerich, and Cologne, where Hardy was disappointed by the machine-made Gothic of the Cathedral, and whence in a few days they went on “between the banks that bear the vine”, to Bonn, Coblenz, Ehrenbreitstein, and Mainz, where they were impressed by a huge confirmation in the cathedral which, by the way, was accompanied by a tune like that of Keble’s Evening Hymn. Heidelberg they loved, and looking west one evening from the top of the tower on the Königsstuhl, Hardy remarks on a singular optical effect that was almost tragic. Owing to mist the wide landscape itself was not visible, but “the Rhine glared like a riband of blood, as if it serpented through the atmosphere above the earth’s surface”. Thence they went to Carlsruhe, where they attended a fair, and searched for a German lady Hardy had known in England, but were unable to find her. Baden and the Black Forest followed, and next they proceeded to Strassburg, and then they turned back, travelling by way of Metz to Brussels. Here

Hardy—maybe with his mind on *The Dynasts*—explored the field of Waterloo, and a day or two later spent some time in investigating the problem of the actual scene of the Duchess of Richmond's Ball, with no result that satisfied him, writing a letter while here to some London paper to that effect—a letter which has not been traced.

A short stay in Brussels was followed by their homeward course through Antwerp, where they halted awhile; and Harwich, having a miserable passage on a windy night in a small steamer with cattle on board.

In London they were much astonished and amused to see in large letters on the newspaper-posters that there had been riots at Antwerp; and they recalled that they had noticed a brass band parading the streets with about a dozen workmen walking quietly behind.

June (1876). Arriving at Yeovil again after another Waterloo-day visit to Chelsea by Hardy (where, in the private parlour of "The Turk's Head" over glasses of grog, the battle was fought yet again by the dwindling number of pensioners who had taken part in it), his first consideration was the resumed question of a cottage, having ere this received hints from relatives that he and his wife "appeared to be wandering about like two tramps"; and also growing incommoded by an accumulation of luggage in packing-cases, mostly books, for of other furniture they had as yet not a stick; till they went out one day to an auction and bought a door-scraper and a book-case, with which two articles they laid the foundation of household goods and effects.

"*June* 25. The irritating necessity of conforming to rules which in themselves have no virtue.

"*June* 26. If it be possible to compress into a sentence all that a man learns between 20 and 40, it is that all things merge in one another—good into evil, generosity into justice, religion into politics, the year into the ages, the world into the universe. With this in view the evolution

of species seems but a minute and obvious process in the same movement."

A pretty cottage overlooking the Dorset Stour—called "Riverside Villa"—offered itself at Sturminster Newton, and this they took at midsummer, hastily furnished it in part by going to Bristol and buying £100 worth of mid-Victorian furniture in two hours; entering on July 3. It was their first house and, though small, probably that in which they spent their happiest days. Several poems commemorate their term there of nearly two years. A memorandum dated just after their entry runs as follows:

"Rowed on the Stour in the evening, the sun setting up the river. Just afterwards a faint exhalation visible on surface of water as we stirred it with the oars. A fishy smell from the numerous eels and other fish beneath. Mowers salute us. Rowed among the water-lilies to gather them. Their long ropy stems.

"Passing the island drove out a flock of swallows from the bushes and sedge, which had gone there to roost. Gathered meadow-sweet. Rowed with difficulty through the weeds, the rushes on the border standing like palisades against the bright sky. . . . A cloud in the sky like a huge quill-pen."

Another entry at this time:

"A story has been told me of a doctor at Maiden Newton, who attended a woman who could not pay him. He said he would take the dead baby in payment. He had it, and it was kept on his mantelpiece in a large glass jar in spirits, which stained the body brown. The doctor, who was a young man, afterwards married and used his wife badly, insisting on keeping the other woman's dead baby on his mantelpiece."

Another:

"Mr. Warry says that a farmer who was tenant of a friend of his, used to take the heart of every calf that died, and, sticking it full of black thorns, hang it on the cotterel,

or cross-bar, of his chimney : this was done to prevent the spread of the disease that had killed the calf. When the next tenant came the chimney smoked very much, and examining it, they found it choked with hearts treated in the manner described—by that time dry and parched.”

Another :

“‘Toad Fair’. An old man, a wizard, used to bring toads’ legs in little bags to Bagber Bridge [close to where Hardy was living], where he was met by crowds of people who came in vehicles and on foot, and bought them as charms to cure scrofula by wearing them round the neck. These legs were supposed to twitch occasionally in the bag, and probably did, when it gave the wearer’s blood a ‘turn’, and changed the course of the disease.”

“There are two sorts of church people ; those who go, and those who don’t go : there is only one sort of chapel-people ; those who go.”

“‘All is vanity’, saith the Preacher. But if all were only vanity, who would mind ? Alas, it is too often worse than vanity ; agony, darkness, death also.”

“A man would never laugh were he not to forget his situation, or were he not one who never has learnt it. After risibility from comedy, how often does the thoughtful mind reproach itself for forgetting the truth ? Laughter always means blindness—either from defect, choice, or accident.”

During a visit to London in December Hardy attended a Conference on the Eastern Question at St. James’s Hall, and heard speak Mr. Gladstone, Lord Shaftesbury, Hon. E. Ashley, Anthony Trollope, and the Duke of Westminster. “Trollope outran the five or seven minutes allowed for each speech, and the Duke, who was chairman, after various soundings of the bell, and other hints that he must stop, tugged at Trollope’s coat-tails in desperation. Trollope turned round, exclaimed parenthetically, ‘Please leave my coat alone’, and went on speaking.”



Jemima Hardy
1876

They spent Christmas with Hardy's father and mother; and while there his father told them that when he was a boy the hobby-horse was still a Christmas amusement. On one occasion the village band of West Stafford was at Mr. Floyer's (the landowner's) at a party, where among other entertainments was that of the said hobby-horse. One of the servants was terrified death-white at the sight of it running about, and rushed into an adjoining dark room where the band's violoncello was lying, entering with such force as to knock off the neck of the instrument.

A Pair of Blue Eyes was much to the taste of French readers, and was favourably criticized in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* early the next year (1877). It appears to have been also a romance that Hardy himself did not wish to let die, for we find him writing to Mr. George Smith in the following April:

"There are circumstances in connection with *A Pair of Blue Eyes* which make me anxious to favour it, even at the expense of profit, if I can possibly do so. . . . I know that you do sometimes, not to say frequently, take an interest in producing a book quite apart from commercial views as a publisher, and I should like to gain such interest for this one of mine. . . . I can get a photograph of the picturesque Cornish coast, the scene of the story, from which a drawing could be made for the frontispiece."

Mr. Smith replied that though he had not printed the original edition he would take it up, profit or no profit; but for some unexplained reason the book was published at other hands, the re-issue receiving much commendatory notice.

"May 1. A man comes every evening to the cliff in front of our house to see the sun set, timing himself to arrive a few minutes before the descent. Last night he came, but there was a cloud. His disappointment."

"May 30. Walking to Marnhull. The prime of bird-singing. The thrushes and blackbirds are the most

prominent,—pleading earnestly rather than singing, and with such modulation that you seem to see their little tongues curl inside their bills in their emphasis. A bullfinch sings from a tree with a metallic sweetness piercing as a fife. Further on I come to a hideous carcase of a house in a green landscape, like a skull on a table of dessert.”

Same date:

“I sometimes look upon all things in inanimate Nature as pensive mutes.”

“*June 3.* Mr. Young says that his grandfather [about 1750-1830] was very much excited, as was everybody in Sturminster, when a mail-coach ran from Poole to Bristol. On the morning it ran for the first time he got up early, swept *the whole street*, and sprinkled sand for the vehicle and horses to pass over.”

Same date:

“The world often feels certain works of genius to be great, without knowing why: hence it may be that particular poets and novelists may have had the wrong quality in them noticed and applauded as that which makes them great.”

We also find in this June of 1877 an entry that adumbrates *The Dynasts* yet again—showing that the idea by this time has advanced a stage—from that of a ballad, or ballad-sequence, to a “grand drama”: viz.:

“Consider a grand drama, based on the wars with Napoleon, or some one campaign, (but not as Shakespeare’s historical dramas). It might be called ‘Napoleon’, or ‘Josephine’, or by some other person’s name.”

He writes also, in another connection:

“There is enough poetry in what is left [in life], after all the false romance has been abstracted, to make a sweet pattern: e.g., the poem by H. Coleridge:

“‘She is not fair to outward view’.

“So, then, if Nature’s defects must be looked in the face

and transcribed, whence arises the *art* in poetry and novel-writing? which must certainly show art, or it becomes merely mechanical reporting. I think the art lies in making these defects the basis of a hitherto unperceived beauty, by irradiating them with 'the light that never was' on their surface, but is seen to be latent in them by the spiritual eye."

"*June 28.* Being Coronation Day there are games and dancing on the green at Sturminster Newton. The stewards with white rosettes. One is very anxious, fearing that while he is attending to the runners the leg of mutton on the pole will go wrong; hence he walks hither and thither with a compressed countenance and eyes far ahead.

"The pretty girls, just before a dance, stand in inviting positions on the grass. As the couples in each figure pass near where their immediate friends loiter, each girl-partner gives a laughing glance at such friends, and whirls on."

"*June 29.* Have just passed through a painful night and morning. Our servant, whom we liked very much, was given a holiday yesterday to go to Bournemouth with her young man. Came home last night at ten, seeming oppressed. At about half-past twelve, when we were supposed to be asleep, she crept downstairs, went out, and on looking from the back window of our bedroom I saw her come from the outhouse with a man. She appeared to have only her night-gown on and something round her shoulders. Beside her slight white figure in the moonlight his form looked dark and gigantic. She preceded him to the door. Before I had thought what to do E. had run downstairs, and met her, and ordered her to bed. The man disappeared. Found that the bolts of the back-door had been oiled. He had evidently often stayed in the house.

"She remained quiet till between four and five, when she got out of the dining-room window and vanished."

"*June 30.* About one o'clock went to her father's cottage in the village, where we thought she had gone. Found them poorer than I expected (for they are said to be an old county family). Her father was in the field hay-making, and a little girl fetched him from the haymakers. He came across to me amid the windrows of hay, and seemed to read bad news in my face. She had not been home. I remembered that she had dressed up in her best clothes, and she probably has gone to Stalbridge to her lover."

The further career of this young woman is not recorded, except as to one trifling detail.

"*July 4.* Went to Stalbridge. Mrs. — is a charming woman. When we were looking over the church she recommended me to try a curious seat, adding, though we were only talking about the church itself, 'That's where I sat when Jamie was christened, and I could see him very well'. Another seat she pointed out with assumed casualness as being the one where she sat when she was churched; as if it were rather interesting that she did sit in those places, in spite of her not being a romantic person. When we arrived at her house she told us that Jamie really could not be seen—he was in a dreadful state—covered with hay; half laughing and catching our eyes while she spoke, as if we should know at once how intensely humorous he must appear under those circumstances. Jamie was evidently her life, and flesh, and raiment. . . . Her husband is what we call a 'yopping, or yapping man'. He strains his countenance hard in smiling, and keeps it so for a distinct length of time, so that you may on no account whatever miss his smile and the point of the words that gave rise to it. Picks up pictures and china for eighteenpence worth ever so much more. Gives cottagers a new set of tea-cups with handles for old ones without handles—an exchange which they are delighted to make."

"Country life at Sturminster. Vegetables pass from



Thomas Hardy senior

1877

growing to boiling, fruit from the bushes to the pudding, without a moment's halt, and the gooseberries that were ripening on the twigs at noon are in the tart an hour later."

"*July 13.* The sudden disappointment of a hope leaves a scar which the ultimate fulfilment of that hope never entirely removes."

"*July 27.* James Bushrod of Broadmayne saw the two German soldiers [of the York Hussars] shot [for desertion] on Bincombe Down in 1801. It was in the path across the Down, or near it. James Selby of the same village thinks there is a mark." [The tragedy was used in *The Melancholy Hussar*, the real names of the deserters being given.]

"*August 13.* We hear that Jane, our late servant, is soon to have a baby. Yet never a sign of one is there for us."

"*September 25.* Went to Shroton Fair. In a twopenny show saw a woman beheaded. In another a man whose hair grew on one side of his face. Coming back across Hambledon Hill (where the Club-Men assembled, temp. Cromwell) a fog came on. I nearly got lost in the dark inside the earthworks, the old hump-backed man I had parted from on the other side of the hill, who was going somewhere else before coming across the earthworks in my direction, being at the bottom as soon as I. A man might go round and round all night in such a place."

"*September 28.* An object or mark raised or made by man on a scene is worth ten times any such formed by unconscious Nature. Hence clouds, mists, and mountains are unimportant beside the wear on a threshold, or the print of a hand."

"*October 31.* To Bath. Took lodgings for my father near the baths and Abbey. Met him at G. W. Station. Took him to the lodgings. To theatre in the evening. Stayed in Bath. Next day went with father to the baths, to begin the cure."

During this year 1877 Hardy had the sadness of

hearing of the death of Raphael Brandon, the literary architect whom he had been thrown with seven years earlier, at a critical stage in his own career. He also at this time entered into an interesting correspondence with Mrs. Chatteris, daughter of Admiral Sir Thomas Hardy, upon some facts in the life of the latter. But his main occupation at Riverside Villa (or "Rivercliff" as they sometimes called it) was writing *The Return of the Native*. The only note he makes of its progress is that, on November 8, parts 3, 4, and 5 of the story were posted to Messrs. Chatto and Windus for publication in (of all places) *Belgravia*—a monthly magazine then running. Strangely enough, the rich alluvial district of Sturminster Newton in which the author was now living was not used by him at this time as a setting for the story he was constructing there, but the heath country twenty miles off. It may be mentioned here that the name "Eustacia" which he gave to his heroine was that of the wife of the owner of the manor of Ower Moigne in the reign of Henry IV., which parish includes part of the "Egdon" Heath of the story (*vide* Hutchins's *Dorset*); and that "Clement", the name of the hero, was suggested by its being borne by one of his supposed ancestors, Clement le Hardy, of Jersey, whose family migrated from that isle to the west of England at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

On the same day he jots down:

"November 8. Mr. and Mrs. Dashwood came to tea. Mr. Dashwood [a local solicitor and landowner] says that poachers elevate a pan of brimstone on a stick under pheasants at roost, and so stupefy them that they fall.

"Sometimes the keepers make dummy pheasants and fix them in places where pheasants are known to roost: then watch by them. The poachers come; shoot and shoot again, when the keepers rush out.

"At a *battue* the other day lots of the birds ran into the keeper's *house* for protection.

"Mr. D. says that a poacher he defended at Quarter Sessions asked for time to pay the fine imposed, and they gave him till the next Justice-meeting. He said to Mr. D., 'I shall be able to get it out of 'em before then', and in fact he had in a week poached enough birds from the Justices' preserves to pay the five pounds."

"*November 12.* A flooded river after the incessant rains of yesterday. Lumps of froth float down like swans in front of our house. At the arches of the large stone bridge the froth has accumulated and lies like hillocks of salt against the bridge; then the arch chokes, and after a silence coughs out the air and froth, and gurgles on."

"*End of November.* This evening the west is like some vast foundry where new worlds are being cast."

"*December 22.* In the evening I went with Dr. Leach the coroner to an inquest which was to be held at Stourton Caundell on the body of a boy. Arrived at the Trooper Inn after a lonely drive through dark and muddy lanes. Met at the door by the Superintendent of Police and a policeman in plain clothes. Also by Mr. Long, who had begun the *post-mortem*. We then went to the cottage; a woman or two, and children, were sitting by the fire, who looked at us with a cowed expression. Upstairs the body of the boy lay on a box covered with a sheet. It was uncovered, and Mr. Long went on with his autopsy, I holding a candle, and the policeman another. Found a clot in the heart, but no irritant poison in the stomach, as had been suspected. The inquest was then held at the inn."

"*December 26.* In literature young men usually begin their careers by being judges, and as wisdom and old experience arrive they reach the dignity of standing as culprits at the bar before new young bloods who have in their turn sprung up in the judgment-seat."

A correspondence with Baron Tauchnitz in reference to Continental editions of his books was one of the businesses of the year-end.

Despite the pleasure of this life at Sturminster Newton Hardy had decided that the practical side of his vocation of novelist demanded that he should have his headquarters in or near London. The wisdom of his decision, considering the nature of his writing, he afterwards questioned. So in the first week of February he and Mrs. Hardy went up to look for a house, and about the middle of the month he signed an agreement for a three-years' lease of one at Upper Tooting, close to Wandsworth Common.

"*March 5.* Concert at Sturminster. A Miss Marsh of Sutton [Keinton ?] Mandeville sang 'Should he upbraid', to Bishop's old tune. She is the sweetest of singers—thrush-like in the descending scale, and lark-like in the ascending—drawing out the soul of listeners in a gradual thread of excruciating attenuation like silk from a cocoon."

Many years after Hardy was accustomed to say that this was the most marvellous old song in English music in its power of touching an audience. There was no surer card to play as an *encore*, even when it was executed but indifferently well. He wrote some lines thereon entitled "The Maid of Keinton Mandeville".

"*March 18.* End of the Sturminster Newton idyll . . ." [the following is written in later] "Our happiest time."

It was also a poetical time. Several poems in *Moments of Vision* contain memories of it, such as "Overlooking the River Stour", "The Musical Box", and "On Sturminster Foot-Bridge".

That evening of March 18 a man came to arrange about packing their furniture, and the next day it was all out of the house. They slept at Mrs. Dashwood's, after breakfasting, lunching, and dining there; and in the morning saw their goods off, and left Sturminster for London.

CHAPTER IX

LIFE AND LITERATURE IN A LONDON SUBURB

1878-1880: *Act.* 37-39

Two days later they beheld their furniture descending from a pair of vans at 1 Arundel Terrace ("The Larches"), Trinity Road, just beyond Wandsworth Common. They had stayed at Bolingbroke Grove to be near.

"*March* 22. We came from Bolingbroke Grove to Arundel Terrace and slept there for the first time. Our house is the south-east corner one where Brodrick Road crosses Trinity Road down towards Wandsworth Common Station, the side door being in Brodrick Road."

"*April*—Note. A Plot, or Tragedy, should arise from the gradual closing in of a situation that comes of ordinary human passions, prejudices, and ambitions, by reason of the characters taking no trouble to ward off the disastrous events produced by the said passions, prejudices, and ambitions."

"The advantages of the letter-system of telling a story (passing over the disadvantages) are that, hearing what one side has to say, you are led constantly to the imagination of what the other side must be feeling, and at last are anxious to know if the other side does really feel what you imagine."

"*April* 22. The method of Boldini, the painter of 'The Morning Walk' in the French Gallery two or three years ago (a young lady beside an ugly blank wall on an ugly highway)—of Hobbema, in his view of a road with formal

lopped trees and flat tame scenery—is of that infusing emotion into the baldest external objects either by the presence of a human figure among them, or by mark of some human connection with them.

“This accords with my feeling about, say, Heidelberg and Baden *versus* Scheveningen—as I wrote at the beginning of *The Return of the Native*—that the beauty of association is entirely superior to the beauty of aspect, and a beloved relative’s old battered tankard to the finest Greek vase. Paradoxically put, it is to see the beauty in ugliness.”

“*April 29.* Mr. George Smith (Smith Elder and Co.) informs me that how he first got to know Thackeray was through ‘a mutual friend’—to whom Smith said, ‘Tell Thackeray that I will publish everything he likes to write’. This was before Thackeray was much known, and when he had only published the Titmarsh and Yellowplush papers. However, Thackeray did not appear. When they at length met, Thackeray said he wished to publish *Vanity Fair*, and Smith undertook it. Thackeray also said he had offered it to three or four publishers who had refused it. ‘Why didn’t you come to me?’ said Smith. ‘Why didn’t you come to me?’ said Thackeray.”

“*June 8.* To Grosvenor Gallery. Seemed to have left flesh behind, and entered a world of soul. In some of the pictures, *e.g.* A. Tadema’s ‘Sculpture’ (men at work carving the Sphinx), and ‘Ariadne abandoned by Theseus’ (an uninteresting dreary shore, little tent one corner, etc.) the principles I have mentioned have been applied to choice of subject.”

“*June 16.* Sunday evening. At Mr. Alexander Macmillan’s with E. He told me a story the late Mrs. Carlyle told him. One day when she was standing alone on Craigenputtock Moor, where she and Mr. Carlyle were living, she discerned in the distance a red spot. It proved to be the red cloak of a woman who passed for a witch in those parts. Mrs. Carlyle got to know her, and ultimately learnt

her history. She was the daughter of a laird owning about eighty acres, and there had come to their house in her young-womanhood a young dealer in cattle. The daughter and he fell in love, and were married, and both lived with their father, whose farm the young man took in hand to manage. But he ran the farmer into debt, and ultimately (I think) house and property had to be sold. The young man vanished. A boy was born to the wife, and after a while she went away to find her husband. She came back in a state of great misery, but would not tell where she had been. It leaked out that the husband was a married man. She was proud and would not complain; but her father died; the boy grew up and was intended for a school-master, but he was crossing the moor one night and lost his way; was buried in the snow, and frozen to death. She lived on in a hut there, and became the red-cloaked old woman who was Mrs. Carlyle's witch-neighbour."

In June he was elected a member of the Savile Club, and by degrees fell into line as a London man again. Dining at Mr. Kegan Paul's, Kensington Square, the same summer, they met Mr. Leighton (Sir F. Leighton's father), his daughter Mrs. Sutherland Orr, who had been in India during the Mutiny, and Professor Huxley, whom they had met before at Mr. Macmillan's. "We sat down by daylight, and as we dined the moon brightened the trees in the garden, and shone under them into the room." For Huxley Hardy had a liking which grew with knowledge of him—though that was never great—speaking of him as a man who united a fearless mind with the warmest of hearts and the most modest of manners.

"*July*. When a couple are shown to their room at an hotel, before the husband has seen that it is a room at all, the wife has found the looking-glass and is arranging her bonnet."

"*August 3*. Minto dined with me at the club. Joined at end of dinner by W. H. Pollock, and we all three went

to the Lyceum. It was Irving's last night, in which he appeared in a scene from *Richard III.*; then as 'Jingle'; then recited 'Eugene Aram's Dream'—(the only piece of literature outside plays that actors seem to know of). As 'Jingle', forgetting his part, he kept up one shoulder as in *Richard III.* We went to his dressing-room, found him naked to the waist: champagne in tumblers."

"August 31. to Sept. 9. In Dorset. Called on William Barnes the poet. Went to Kingston Lacy to see the pictures. Dined at West-Stafford Rectory. Went with C. W. Moule [Fellow of Corpus, Cambridge] to Ford Abbey."

"September 20. Returned and called on G. Smith. Agreed to his terms for publishing *The Return of the Native.*"

Shortly after he wrote to Messrs Smith and Elder:

"I enclose a sketch-map of the supposed scene in which *The Return of the Native* is laid, copied from the one I used in writing the story; and my suggestion is that we place an engraving of it as frontispiece to the first volume. Unity of place is so seldom preserved in novels that a map of the scene of action is as a rule quite impracticable. But since the present story affords an opportunity of doing so I am of opinion that it would be a desirable novelty." The publishers fell in with the idea and the map was made.

A peculiarity in the local descriptions running through all Hardy's writings may be instanced here—that he never uses the word "Dorset", never names the county at all (except possibly in an explanatory footnote), but obliterates the names of the six counties, whose area he traverses in his scenes, under the general appellation of "Wessex"—an old word that became quite popular after the date of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, where he first introduced it. So far did he carry this idea of the unity of Wessex that he used to say he had grown to forget the crossing of county boundaries within the ancient kingdom

—in this respect being quite unlike the poet Barnes, who was “Dorset” emphatically.

Mrs. Hardy used to relate that during this summer, she could not tell exactly when, she looked out of a window at the back of the house, and saw her husband running without a hat down Brodrick Road, and disappearing round a corner into a by-street. Before she had done wondering what could have happened he returned, and all was explained. While sitting in his writing-room he had heard a street barrel-organ of the kind that used to be called a “harmoniflute”, playing somewhere near at hand the very quadrille over which the jaunty young man who had reached the end of his time at Hicks’s had spread such a bewitching halo more than twenty years earlier by describing the glories of dancing round to its beats on the Cremorne platform or at the Argyle Rooms, and which Hardy had never been able to identify. He had thrown down his pen, and, as she had beheld, flown out and approached the organ-grinder with such speed that the latter, looking frightened, began to shuffle off. Hardy called out, “What’s the name of that tune?” The grinder—a young foreigner, who could not speak English—exclaimed trembling as he stopped, “Quad-ree-ya! quad-ree-ya!” and pointed to the index in front of the instrument. Hardy looked: “Quadrille” was the only word there. He had till then never heard it since his smart senior had whistled it; he never heard it again, and never ascertained its name. It was possibly one of Jullien’s—then gone out of vogue—set off rather by the youthful imagination of Hardy at sixteen than by any virtue in the music itself.

“*October 27.* Sunday. To Chelsea Hospital and Ranelagh Gardens: met a palsied pensioner—deaf. He is 88—was in the Seventh (?) Hussars. He enlisted in 1807 or 1808, served under Sir John Moore in the Peninsula, through the Retreat, and was at Waterloo. It was ex-

traordinary to talk and shake hands with a man who had shared in that terrible winter march to Coruña, and had seen Moore face to face.

"Afterwards spoke to two or three others. When an incorrigible was drummed out of barracks to the tune of the Rogue's March—(as my father had told me)—all the facings and the buttons were previously cut from his uniform, and a shilling given him. The fifes and drums accompanied him only just beyond the barrack-gates.

"In those days if you only turned your eye you were punished. My informant had known men receive 600 lashes—300 at a time, or 900, if the doctor said it could be borne. After the punishment salt was rubbed on the victim's back, to harden it. He did not feel the pain of this, his back being numbed by the lashes. The men would hold a bullet between their teeth and chew it during the operation."

The Return of the Native was published by Messrs Smith and Elder in November, *The Times'* remark upon the book being that the reader found himself taken farther from the madding crowd than ever. Old Mrs. Procter's amusing criticism in a letter was "Poor Eustacia. I so fully understood her longing for the Beautiful. I love the Common; but still one may wish for something else. I rejoice that Venn [a character] is happy. A man is never cured when he loves a stupid woman [Thomasin]. Beauty fades, and intelligence and wit grow irritating; but your dear Dulness is always the same."

"*November* 28. Woke before it was light. Felt that I had not enough staying power to hold my own in the world."

On the last day of the year Hardy's father wrote, saying that his mother was unwell, and that he had "drunk both their healths in gin and rhubarb wine, with hopes that they would live to see many and many a New Year's day". He suggested that they should come ere long.

"1879. *January* 1. New Year's thought. A perception of the FAILURE of THINGS to be what they are meant to be, lends them, in place of the intended interest, a new and greater interest of an unintended kind."

The poem "A January Night. 1879" in *Moments of Vision* relates to an incident of this new year (1879) which occurred here at Tooting, where they seemed to begin to feel that "there had past away a glory from the earth". And it was in this house that their troubles began. This, however, is anticipating unduly.

"*January* 30. 1879. In Steven's book-shop, Holywell Street. A bustling vigorous young curate comes in—red-faced and full of life—the warm breath puffing from his mouth in a jet into the frosty air, and religion sitting with an ill grace upon him.

"'Have you *Able to Save?*'

"Shopman addressed does not know, and passes on the inquiry to the master standing behind with his hat on: '*Able to Save?*'

"'I don't know—hoi! (to boy at other end). Got *Able to Save?* Why the devil can't you attend!'

"'What, Sir?'

"' *Able to Save!*'

"Boy's face a blank. Shopman to curate: 'Get it by to-morrow afternoon, Sir.'

"'And please get *Words of Comfort.*'

"' *Words of Comfort.* Yes, Sir.' Exit curate.

"Master: 'Why the h—— don't anybody here know what's in stock?' Business proceeds in a subdued manner."

"*February* 1. To Dorchester. Cold. Rain on snow. Henry seen advancing through it, with wagonette and Bob [their father's horse], to the station entrance. Drove me to Bockhampton through the sleet and rain from the East, which shaved us like a razor. Wind on Fordington Moor cut up my sleeves and round my wrists—even up to my elbows. The light of the lamp at the

bottom of the town shone on the reins in Henry's hands, and showed them glistening with ice. Bob's behind-part was a mere grey arch; his foreparts invisible."

"*February 4.* To Weymouth and Portland. As to the ruined walls in the low part of Chesil, a woman says the house was washed down in the November gale of 1824. The owner never rebuilt it, but emigrated with his family. She says that in her house one person was drowned (they were all in bed except the fishermen) and next door two people. It was about four in the morning that the wave came."

"*February 7.* Father says that when there was a hanging at Dorchester in his boyhood it was carried out at one o'clock, it being the custom to wait till the mail-coach came in from London in case of a reprieve.

"He says that at Puddletown Church, at the time of the old west-gallery violin, oboe, and clarinet players, Tom Sherren (one of them) used to copy tunes during the sermon. So did my grandfather at Stinsford Church. Old Squibb the parish-clerk used also to stay up late at night helping my grandfather in his 'prick-noting', (as he called it).

"He says that William, son of Mr. S—— the Rector of W——, became a miller at O—— Mill, and married a German woman whom he met at Puddletown Fair playing her tambourine. When her husband was gone to market she used to call in John Porter, who could play the fiddle, and lived near, and give him some gin, when she would beat the tambourine to his playing. She was a good-natured woman with blue eyes, brown hair, and a round face; rather slovenly. Her husband was a hot, hasty fellow, though you could hear by his speech that he was a better educated man than ordinary millers.

"G. R.—— (who is a humorist) showed me his fowl-house, which was built of old church-materials bought at Wellspring the builder's sale. R.'s chickens

roost under the gilt-lettered Lord's Prayer and Creed, and the cock crows and flaps his wings against the Ten Commandments. It reminded me that I had seen these same Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer, and Creed, before, forming the sides of the stone-mason's shed in that same builder's yard, and that he had remarked casually that they did not prevent the workmen 'cussing and damning' the same as ever. It also reminded me of seeing the old font of — Church, Dorchester, in a garden, used as a flower-vase, the initials of ancient god-parents and Churchwardens still legible upon it. A comic business—church restoration.

"A villager says of the parson, who has been asked to pray for a sick person: 'His prayers wouldn't save a mouse'."

"*February* 12. Sketched the English Channel from Mayne Down.

"I am told that when Jack Ketch had done whipping by the Town Pump [Dorchester] the prisoners' coats were thrown over their bleeding backs, and, guarded by the town constables with their long staves, they were conducted back to prison. Close at their heels came J. K., the cats held erect—there was one cat to each man—the lashes were of knotted whipcord.

"Also that in a village near Yeovil about 100 years ago, there lived a dumb woman, well known to my informant's mother. One day the woman suddenly spoke and said:

"A cold winter, a forward spring,
A bloody summer, a dead King";

"She then dropped dead. The French Revolution followed immediately after."

"*February* 15. Returned to London."

"*April* 5. Mary writes to tell me that 'there is a very queer quire at Steepleton Church. It consists only of a

shoemaker who plays the bass-viol, and his mother who sings the air'."

"*June 9.* To the International Literary Congress at the rooms of the Society of Arts. Met M. de Lesseps. A few days afterwards to the Soirée Musicale at the Hanover Square Club, to meet members of the Literary Congress and the Comédie Française: A large gathering. The whole thing a free-and-easy mix-up. I was a total stranger, and wondered why I was there: many others were total strangers to everybody else; sometimes two or three of these total strangers would fraternize from very despair. A little old Frenchman, however, who bustled about in a skull cap and frilled shirt, seemed to know everybody."

"*June 21.* With E. to Bosworth Smith's, Harrow (for the week-end). In the aviary he has a raven and a barn owl. One ridiculously small boy was in tails—he must have been a bright boy, but I forgot to ask about him. One of the boys in charity-tails could have eaten him.

"Bos's brother Henry the invalid has what I fear to be a churchyard cough [he died not so very long after]. His cough pleases the baby, so he coughs artificially much more than required by his disease, to go on pleasing the baby. Mrs. H. S. implores her husband not to do so; but he does, nevertheless, showing the extraordinary non-chalance about death that so many of his family show.

"In chapel—which we attended—the little tablets in memory of the boys who have died at school there were a moving sight.

"Sunday night we went with Bos, to the boys' dormitories. One boy was unwell, and we talked to him as he lay in bed, his arm thrown over his head. Another boy has his room hung with proof engravings after Landseer. In another room were the two K——s of Clyffe. In another a big boy and a little boy—the little boy being very earnest about birds' eggs, and the big boy silently affecting a mind above the subject, though covertly interested."

“27. From Tooting to Town again. In railway carriage a *too* statuesque girl; but her features were absolutely perfect. She sat quite still, and her smiles did not extend further than a finger-nail's breadth from the edge of her mouth. The repose of her face was such that when the train shook her it seemed painful. Her mouth was very small, and her face not unlike that of a nymph. In the train coming home there was a contrasting girl of sly humour—the pupil of her eye being mostly half under the outer lid of her eyelid.”

It was in this year that pourparlers were opened with Leslie Stephen about another story for the *Cornhill*; and Hardy informed him that he was writing a tale of the reign of George III.; on which Stephen remarks in respect of historical novels:

“I can only tell you what is my own taste, but I rather think that my taste is in this case the common one. I think that a historical character in a novel is almost always a nuisance; but I like to have a bit of history in the background, so to speak; to feel that George III. is just round the corner, though he does not present himself in full front.”

Since coming into contact with Leslie Stephen about 1873, as has been shown, Hardy had been much influenced by his philosophy, and also by his criticism. He quotes the following sentence from Stephen in his notebook under the date of July 1, 1879:

“The ultimate aim of the poet should be to touch our hearts by showing his own, and not to exhibit his learning, or his fine taste, or his skill in mimicking the notes of his predecessors.” That Hardy adhered pretty closely to this principle when he resumed the writing of poetry can hardly be denied.

“*July 8 or 9.* With E. to Mrs. [Alexander] Macmillan's garden-party at Knapdale, near our house. A great many present. Talked to Mr. White of Harvard University,

and Mr. Henry Holt the New York publisher, who said that American spelling and idiom must prevail over the English, as it was sixty millions against thirty. I forgot for the moment to say that it did not follow, the usage set up by a few people of rank, education, and fashion being the deciding factor. Also to John Morley, whom I had not seen since he read my first manuscript. He remembered it, and said in his level uninterested voice: 'Well, since we met, you have . . .' etc. etc. Also met a Mrs. H., who pretended to be an admirer of my books, and apparently had never read one. She had with her an American lady, sallow, with black dancing eyes, dangling earrings, yellow costume, and gay laugh." It was at this garden-party at Mrs. Macmillan's that the thunderstorm came on which Hardy made use of in a similar scene in *A Laodicean*.

"July 12. To Chislehurst to funeral of young Louis Napoleon. Met [Sir G.] Greenhill in the crowd. We stood on the common while the procession passed. Was struck by the profile of Prince Napoleon as he walked by bareheaded, a son on each arm: complexion dark, sallow, even sinister: a round projecting chin: countenance altogether extraordinarily remindful of Boney." Hardy said long after that this sight of Napoleon's nephew—"Plon-Plon"—had been of enormous use to him, when writing *The Dynasts*, in imagining the Emperor's appearance. And it has been remarked somewhere in print that when the Prince had been met, without warning in Paris at night, crossing one of the bridges over the Seine, the beholder had started back aghast under the impression that he was seeing the spirit of the great Napoleon.

"July 29. Charles Leland—a man of higher literary rank than ever was accorded him [the American author of *Hans Breitmann's Ballads* and translator of Heine] told some of his gipsy tales at the Savile Club, including one of how he visited at a country mansion, and while there went to see a gipsy-family living in a tent on the squire's

land. He talked to them in Romany, and was received by the whole family as a bosom-friend. He was told by the head gipsy that his, the gipsy's, brother would be happy to know him when he came out of gaol, but that at present he was doing six months for a horse. While Leland was sitting by the fire drinking brandy-and-water with this friend, the arrival of some gentlemen and ladies, fellow-guests at the house he was staying at, was announced. They had come to see the gipsies out of curiosity. Leland threw his brandy from his glass into the fire, not to be seen tipping there, but as they entered it blazed up in a blue flare much to their amazement, as if they thought it some unholy libation, which added to their surprise at discovering him. How he explained himself I cannot remember."

In the latter part of August Hardy paid a visit to his parents in Dorset and a week later Mrs. Hardy joined him there. They spent a few days in going about the district, and then took lodgings at Weymouth, right over the harbour, his mother coming to see them, and driving to Portland, Upwey, etc., in their company. Their time in the port was mostly wet; "the [excursion] steamer-bell ringing persistently, and nobody going on board except an unfortunate boys' school that had come eight miles by train that morning to spend a happy day by the sea. The rain goes into their baskets of provisions, and runs out a strange mixture of cake-juice and mustard-water, but they try to look as if they were enjoying it—all except the pale thin assistant-master who has come with them, and whose face is tragic with his responsibilities. The Quay seems quite deserted till, on going along it, groups of boatmen are discovered behind each projecting angle of wall—martyrs in countenance, talking of what their receipts would have been if the season had turned out fine; and the landladies' faces at every lodging-house window watching the drizzle and the sea it half obscures. Two adventurous

visitors have emerged from their lodgings as far as the doorway, where they stand in their waterproof cloaks and goloshes, saying cheerfully, 'the air will do us good, and we can change as soon as we come in'. Young men rush to the bathing machines in ulsters, and the men engaged in loading a long-voyage steamer lose all patience, and say: 'I'm blanked, if it goes on much longer like this we shall be rotted alive!' The tradespeople are exceptionally civil, and fancy prices have miraculously disappeared. . . .

"Am told that —— has turned upon her drunken husband at last, and knocks him down without ceremony. In the morning he holds out his trembling hand and says, 'Give me a sixpence for a drop o' brandy—please do ye, my dear!'" This was a woman Hardy had known as a pretty laughing girl, who had been married for the little money she had.

CHAPTER X

LONDON, NORMANDY, AND CAMBRIDGE

1879-1880: *Act.* 39-40

AFTER their return to London they visited and dined out here and there, and as Mrs. Hardy had never seen the Lord Mayor's Show Hardy took her to view it from the upper windows of *Good Words* in Ludgate Hill. She remarked that the surface of the crowd seemed like a boiling cauldron of porridge. He jots down that "as the crowd grows denser it loses its character of an aggregate of countless units, and becomes an organic whole, a mollusious black creature having nothing in common with humanity, that takes the shape of the streets along which it has lain itself, and throws out horrid excrescences and limbs into neighbouring alleys; a creature whose voice exudes from its scaly coat, and who has an eye in every pore of its body. The balconies, stands, and railway-bridge are occupied by small detached shapes of the same tissue, but of gentler motion, as if they were the spawn of the monster in their midst."

On a Sunday in the same November they met in Mr. Frith's studio, to which they had been invited, Sir Percy Shelley (the son of Percy Bysshe) and Lady Shelley. Hardy said afterwards that the meeting was as shadowy and remote as were those previous occasions when he had impinged on the penumbra of the poet he loved—that time of his sleeping at the Cross-Keys, St. John Street, and that of the visits he paid to Old St. Pancras Church-

yard. He was to enter that faint penumbra twice more, once when he stood beside Shelley's dust in the English cemetery at Rome, and last when by Mary Shelley's grave at Bournemouth.

They also met in the studio a deaf old lady, introduced as "Lady Bacon" (though she must have been Lady Charlotte Bacon) who "talked vapidly of novels, saying she never read them—not thinking them *positively wicked*, but, well . . .". Mr. Firth afterwards explained that she was Byron's Ianthe, to whom he dedicated the First and Second Cantos of *Childe Harold* when she was Lady Charlotte Harley. That "Peri of the West", with an eye "wild as the Gazelle's", and a voice that had entered Byron's ear, was now a feeble beldame muffled up in black and furs. (It may be mentioned that she died the following year.)

Hardy met there too—a distinctly modern juxtaposition—Miss Braddon, who "had a broad, thought-creased, world-beaten face—a most amiable woman", whom he always liked.

In December Hardy attended the inaugural dinner of the Rabelais Club at the Tavistock Hotel, in a "large, empty, dimly-lit, cheerless apartment, with a gloomy crimson screen hiding what remained of the only cheerful object there—the fire. There was a fog in the room as in the streets, and one man only came in evening dress, who, Walter Pollock said, looked like the skull at the banquet, but who really looked like a conjuror dying of the cold among a common set of thick-jacketed men who could stand it. When I came in Leland turned his high flat façade to me—like that of a clock-tower; his face being the clock-face, his coat swaying like a pendulum; features earnest and energetic, altogether those of a single-minded man. There were also Fred Pollock, girlish-looking; and genial Walter Besant, with his West-of-England sailor face and silent pantomimic laughter. Sir Patrick Colquhoun

was as if he didn't know what he was there for, how he arrived there, or how he was going to get home again. Two others present, Palmer [afterwards murdered in the East], and Joe Knight [the dramatic critic], also seemed puzzled about it.

"When dinner was over and things had got warmer, Leland in his speech remarked with much emphasis that we were men who ought to be encouraged, which sentiment was applauded with no misgivings of self-conceit. D——, now as always, made himself the clown of our court, privileged to say anything by virtue of his office. Hence when we rose to drink the health of absent members, he stayed firmly sitting, saying he would not drink it because they ought to have been there, afterwards lapsing into Spanish on the strength of his being going some day to publish a translation of Don Quixote. Altogether we were as Rabelaisian as it was possible to be in the foggy circumstances, though I succeeded but poorly."

It should be explained that this Rabelais Club, which had a successful existence for many years, had been instituted by Sir Walter Besant—a great lover of clubs and societies—as a declaration for virility in literature. Hardy was pressed to join as being the most virile writer of works of imagination then in London; while, it may be added, Henry James after a discussion was rejected for the lack of that quality, though he was afterwards invited as a guest.

On the first of February 1880 Hardy observed a man skating by himself on the pond by the Trinity-Church Schools at Upper Tooting, near his own house, and was moved to note down:

"It is a warm evening for the date, and there has been a thaw for two or three days, so that the birds sing cheerfully. A buttercup is said to be visible somewhere, and spring has, in short, peeped in upon us. What can the sentiments of that man be, to enjoy *ice* at such a time?

The mental jar must overcome physical enjoyment in any well-regulated mind. He skates round the edge, it being unsafe to go into the middle, and he seems to sigh as he puts up with a limitation resulting from blessed promise."

"1 ARUNDEL TERRACE, TRINITY ROAD,

"UPPER TOOTING, S.W.

"Feb. 2, 1880.

"DEAR MR. LOCKER,

"I can hardly express to you how grateful I am to get your letter. When I consider the perfect literary taste that is shown in all your own writings, apart from their other merits, I am not sure that I do not value your expressions of pleasure more highly than all the printed criticisms put together. It is very generous of you to pass over the defects of style in the book which, whenever I look into it, seem blunders that any child ought to have avoided.

"In enjoying your poems over again, I felt—will you mind my saying it?—quite ill-used to find you had altered two of my favourite lines which I had been in the habit of muttering to myself for some years past. I mean

"‘They never do so now—because
I’m not so handsome as I was.’

"I shall stick to the old reading as much the nicest, whatever you may choose to do in new editions.

"One other remark of quite a different sort. I unhesitatingly affirm that nothing more beautiful and powerful, for its length, than ‘the Old Stone-Mason’ has been done by any modern poet. The only poem which has affected me at all in the same way is Wordsworth’s ‘Two April Mornings’, but this being less condensed than yours does not strike through one with such sudden power as yours in the last verse.

"I will not forget to give myself the pleasure of calling some Sunday afternoon. Meanwhile I should hope that

you will be so kindly disposed as to give us a few more 'old stone-masons' as well as ballads of a lighter kind.

"Believe me, Yours very truly,

"THOMAS HARDY."

The same week Hardy met Matthew Arnold—probably for the first time—at a dinner given by Mr. G. Murray Smith, the publisher, at the Continental Hotel, where also were present Henry James and Richard Jeffries—the latter a modest young man then getting into notice as a writer, through having a year or so earlier published his first successful book, entitled *The Gamekeeper at Home*.

Arnold, according to Hardy's account of their meeting much later, "had a manner of having made up his mind upon everything years ago, so that it was a pleasing futility for his interlocutor to begin thinking new ideas, different from his own, at that time of day". Yet he was frank and modest enough to assure Hardy deprecatingly that he was only a hard-worked school-inspector.

He seems to have discussed the subject of literary style with the younger writer, but all the latter could recall of his remarks thereon was his saying that "the best man to read for style—narrative style—was Swift"—an opinion that may well be questioned, like many more of Arnold's pronouncements, despite his undoubtedly true ones.

At dinner an incident occurred in which he was charmingly amusing. Mrs. Murray Smith having that afternoon found herself suddenly too unwell to preside, her place had to be taken at the last minute by her daughter, and, it being the latter's first experience of the kind, she was timorous as to the time of withdrawal, murmuring to Arnold, "I—think we must retire now?" Arnold put his hand upon her shoulder and pressed her down into her seat as if she were a child—she was not much more,—saying, "No, no! what's the use of going into that room?"

Now I'll pour you out a glass of sherry to keep you here."
And kept there she and the other ladies were.

"SAVILE CLUB,

"SAVILE ROW, W.

"February 11, 1880.

"DEAR MR. HANDLEY MOULE,

"I have just been reading in a Dorset paper a report of your sermon on the death of the Rev. H. Moule, and I cannot refrain from sending you a line to tell you how deeply it has affected me, and—what is more to the point—to express my sense of the singular power with which you have brought Mr. Moule's life and innermost heart before all readers of that address.

"You will, I am sure, believe me when I say that I have been frequently with you and your brothers in spirit during the last few days. Though not, topographically, a parishioner of your father's I virtually stood in that relation to him, and his home generally, during many years of my life, and I always feel precisely as if I had been one. I had many times resolved during the year or two before his death to try to attend a service in the old Church in the old way before he should be gone: but to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow!—I never did.

"A day or two ago Matthew Arnold talked a good deal about him to me: he was greatly struck with an imperfect description I gave him (from what I had heard my father say) of the state of Fordington 50 years ago, and its state after the vicar had brought his energies to bear upon the village for a few years. His words 'energy is genius' express your father very happily.

"Please give my kind remembrances to Mr. Charles Moule and your other brothers who have not forgotten me—if they are with you—and believe me,

"Sincerely yours,

"THOMAS HARDY."

The first week in March the Hardys called by arrangement on Mrs. Procter—the widow of “Barry Cornwall”—at her flat in Queen Anne’s Mansions. Hardy had been asked to her house when he first made her acquaintance before his marriage, and when her husband was living, though bedridden : but being then, as always, backward in seeking new friends, Hardy had never gone—to his regret. He was evidently impressed newly by her on this call, as one who was a remarkable link with the literary past, though she herself was not a literary woman ; and the visit on this Sunday afternoon was the first one of a long series of such, extending over many years almost to her death, for she showed a great liking for Hardy and his wife, and she always made them particularly welcome. It was here, on these Sunday afternoons, that they used frequently to meet Browning.

Hardy said after her death that on such occasions she sat in a fixed attitude, almost as if placed in her seat like an unconscious image of Buddha. Into her eyes and face would come continually an expression from a time fifty or sixty years before, when she was a handsome coquette, a faint tendency to which would show even in old age in the momentary archness of her glance now and then. “You would talk to her”, he said, “and believe you were talking to a person of the same date as yourself, with recent emotions and impulses : you would see her sideways when crossing the room to show you something, and realize her, with sudden sadness, to be a withered woman whose interests and emotions must be nearly extinct.”

Of the poets she had met she expressed herself to have been unattracted by Wordsworth’s personality, but to have had a great liking for Leigh Hunt. She remembered that the latter called one day, bringing with him “a youth whom nobody noticed much”, and who remained in the background, Hunt casually introducing him as “Mr. Keats”.

She would also tell of an experience she and her husband had, shortly after their marriage, when they were living in fashionable lodgings in Southampton Row. They went to see Lamb at Edmonton, and caused him much embarrassment by a hint that she would like to wash her hands, it being a hot day. He seemed bewildered and asked stammeringly if she would mind washing them in the kitchen, which she did.

A little later she wrote to Hardy concerning his short story *Fellow-Townsmen*, which had lately come out in a periodical:

“You are cruel. Why not let him come home again and marry his first love? But I see you are right. He should not have deserted her. I smiled about the Tombstone. Sir Francis Chantrey told me that he had prepared fine plans—nothing could be too beautiful and too expensive at first, and the end was generally merely a headstone.”

It was in the same month, and in the company of Mrs. Procter, that Hardy lunched at Tennyson's at a house Tennyson had temporarily taken in Belgrave Street; Mrs. Tennyson, though an invalid, presiding at the table, at the end of which she reclined, and his friends F. Locker, Countess Russell (Lord John's widow), Lady Agatha Russell, and others, being present. “When I arrived Mrs. Tennyson was lying as if in a coffin, but she got up to welcome me.” Hardy often said that he was surprised to find such an expression of humour in the Poet-Laureate's face, the corners of his mouth twitching with that mood when he talked; “it was a genial human face, which all his portraits belied”; and it was enhanced by a beard and hair straggling like briars, a shirt with a large loose collar, and old steel spectacles. He was very sociable that day, asking Mrs. Procter absurd riddles, and telling Hardy amusing stories, and about misprints in his books that drove him wild, one in especial of late, where “airy does” had

appeared as "hairy does". He said he liked *A Pair of Blue Eyes* the best of Hardy's novels. Tennyson also told him that he and his family were compelled to come to London for a month or two every year, though he hated it, because they all "got so rusty" down in the Isle of Wight if they did not come at all. Hardy often regretted that he never again went to see them, though warmly invited that day both by Tennyson and his wife to pay them a visit at Freshwater.

"March 24. Lunched with Mrs. Procter. She showed me one of her late husband's love-letters, date 1824. Also a photo of Henry James. She says he has made her an offer of marriage. Can it be so?" Mrs. Procter was born in 1800.

At this time he writes down, "A Hint for Reviewers—adapted from Carlyle:

"Observe what is true, not what is false; what is to be loved and held fast, and earnestly laid to heart; not what is to be contemned, and derided, and sportfully cast out-of-doors."

The Hardys' house at Upper Tooting stood in a rather elevated position, and when the air was clear they could see a long way from the top windows. The following note on London at dawn occurs on May 19, a night on which he could not sleep, partly on account of an eerie feeling which sometimes haunted him, a horror at lying down in close proximity to "a monster whose body had four million heads and eight million eyes":

"In upper back bedroom at daybreak: just past three. A golden light behind the horizon; within it are the Four Millions. The roofs are damp gray: the streets are still filled with night as with a dark stagnant flood whose surface brims to the tops of the houses. Above the air is light. A fire or two glares within the mass. Behind are the Highgate Hills. On the Crystal Palace hills in the other direction a lamp is still burning up in the daylight. The

lamps are also still flickering in the street, and one policeman walks down it as if it were noon."

Two days later they were sitting in the chairs by Rotten Row and the Park Drive, and the chief thing he noticed against the sun in the west, was that, "a sparrow descends from the tree amid the stream of vehicles, and drinks from the little pool left by the watering-cart"—the same sunlight causing "a glitter from carriage-lamp glasses, from Coachmen's and footmen's buttons, from silver carriage handles and harness mountings, from a matron's bracelet, from four parasols of four young ladies in a landau, their parasol-hems touching like four mushrooms growing close together."

On the 26th, the Derby Day, Hardy went alone to Epsom. On his way he noticed that "all the people going to the races have a twinkle in their eye, particularly the old men". He lunched there with a friend, and together they proceeded, by permission, through Lord Rosebery's grounds to the Down. They saw and examined the favourite before he emerged—neither one of the twain knowing anything of race-horses or betting—"the jockeys in their great-coats; little ghastly men looking half putrid, standing silent and apathetic while their horses were rubbed down, and saddles adjusted"; till they passed on into the paddock, and the race was run, and the shouts arose, and they "were greeted by a breeze of tobacco-smoke and orange-peels".

During the summer he dined at clubs, etc., meeting again Lord Houghton, Du Maurier, Henry Irving, and Alma-Tadema, among others. Toole, who was at one of these dinners, imitated a number of other actors, Irving included; and though the mimicry was funny and good, "ghostliness arose, in my mind at least, when after a few living ones had been mimicked, each succeeding representation turned out to be that of an actor then in his grave. 'What did they go dying for, stupids!'

said somebody, when Toole's face suddenly lost its smiling."

In July he met Lord Houghton again at dinner, and was introduced by him to James Russell Lowell, who was also present. His opinion of Lowell was that as a man he was charming, as a writer one of extraordinary talent, but of no instinctive and creative genius.

In the same month he arranged with Messrs. Smith and Elder for the three-volume publication of *The Trumpet-Major*, which had been coming out in a periodical, and on the 27th started with Mrs. Hardy for Boulogne, Amiens—"the misfortune of the Cathedral is that it does not look half so lofty as it really is"—and several towns in Normandy, including Etretat, where they put up at the Hôtel Blanquet, and stayed some time, bathing every day—a recreation which cost Hardy dear, for being fond of swimming he was apt to stay too long in the water. Anyhow he blamed these frequent immersions for starting the long illness from which he suffered the following autumn and winter.

From Etretat they went to Havre, and here they had half an hour of whimsical uneasiness. The hotel they chose was on the Quay, one that had been recommended to Hardy by a stranger on the coach, and was old and gloomy in the extreme when they got inside. Mrs. Hardy fancied that the landlord's look was sinister; also the landlady's; and the waiters' manner seemed queer. Their room was hung with heavy dark velvet, and when the chambermaid came, and they talked to her, she sighed continually and spoke in a foreboding voice; as if she knew what was going to happen to them, and was on their side, but could do nothing. The floor of the bedroom was painted a bloody red, and the wall beside the bed was a little battered, as if struggles had taken place there. When they were left to themselves Hardy suddenly remembered that he had told the friendly stranger with whom he had

travelled on the coach from Etretat, and who had recommended the inn, that he carried his money with him in Bank notes to save the trouble of circular notes. He had known it was a thing one never should do; yet he had done it.

They then began to search the room, found a small door behind the curtains of one of their beds, and on opening it there was revealed inside a closet of lumber, which had at its innermost recess another door, leading they did not know whither. With their luggage they barricaded the closet door, so jamming their trunks and portmanteau between the door and the nearest bedstead that it was impossible to open the closet. They lay down and waited, keeping the light burning a long time. Nothing happened, and they slept soundly at last, and awoke to a bright sunny morning.

August 5. They went on to Trouville, to the then fashionable Hôtel Bellevue, and thence to Honfleur, a place more to Hardy's mind, after the fast life of Trouville. On a gloomy gusty afternoon, going up the steep incline through the trees behind the town they came upon a Calvary tottering to its fall; and as it rocked in the wind like a ship's mast Hardy thought that the crudely painted figure of Christ upon it seemed to writhe and cry in the twilight: "Yes, Yes! I agree that this travesty of me and my doctrines should totter and overturn in this modern world!" They hastened on from the strange and ghastly scene.

Thence they went to Lisieux and Caen, where they spent some days, returning to London by the way they had come.

Going down to Dorset in September, Hardy was informed of a curious bit of family history; that his mother's grandfather was a man who worried a good deal about the disposition of his property as he grew old. It was mostly in the form of long leasehold and lifehold houses, and he would call on his lawyer about once a fortnight to make

some alteration in his will. The lawyer lived at Bere Regis, and her grandfather used to talk the matter over with the man who was accustomed to drive him there and back—a connection of his by marriage. Gradually this man so influenced the testator on each journey, by artfully playing on his nervous perplexities as they drove along, that he got three-quarters of the property, including the houses, bequeathed to himself.

The same month he replied to a letter from J. R. Lowell, then American Minister in London :

“DEAR MR. LOWELL :

“I have read with great interest the outline of the proposed Copyright treaty that you have communicated to me in your letter of the 16th.

“For my own part I should be quite ready to accept some such treaty—with a modification in detail mentioned below—since whatever may be one’s opinion on an author’s abstract right to manufacture his property in any country most convenient to him, the treaty would unquestionably remove the heaviest grievances complained of under the existing law.

“The modification I mention refers to the three-months term of grace to be allowed to foreign authors who do not choose to print in both countries simultaneously.

“If I clearly understand the provisions under this head it may happen that in the event of any difficulty about terms between the author and his foreign publishers the author would be bound to give way as the end of the three months approached, or lose all by lapse of copyright. With some provision to meet such a contingency as this the treaty would seem to me satisfactory.”

Accompanying Mrs. Hardy on a day’s shopping in October, Hardy makes this remark on the saleswoman at a fashionable dressmaking establishment in Regent Street, from observing her while he sat waiting :

"She is a woman of somewhat striking appearance, tall, thin, decided ; one who knows what life is, and human nature, to plenitude. Hence she acts as by clockwork ; she puts each cloak on herself, turns round, makes a remark, puts on the next cloak, and the next, and so on, like an automaton. She knows by heart every mood in which a feminine buyer of cloaks can possibly be, and has a machine-made answer promptly ready for each."

On the 16th of October he and his wife paid a visit of a week to Cambridge, in spirits that would have been considerably lower if they had known what was to befall them on their return. They received much hospitality, and were shown the usual buildings and other things worth seeing, though Cambridge was not new to Hardy. After the first day or two he felt an indescribable physical weariness, which was really the beginning of the long illness he was to endure ; but he kept going.

Attending the 5 o'clock service at King's Chapel, he comments upon the architect "who planned this glorious work of fine intelligence" ; also upon Milton's "dim religious light" beheld here, and the scene presented by the growing darkness as viewed from the stalls where they sat. "The reds and the blues of the windows became of one indistinguishable black, the candles guttered in the most fantastic shapes I ever saw,—and while the wicks burnt down these weird shapes changed form ; so that you were fascinated into watching them, and wondering what shape those wisps of wax would take next, till they dropped off with a click during a silence. They were stalactites, plumes, laces ; or rather they were surplices,—frayed shreds from those of bygone 'white-robed scholars', or from their shrouds—dropping bit by bit in a ghostly decay. Wordsworth's ghost, too, seemed to haunt the place, lingering and wandering on somewhere alone in the fan-traceried vaulting."

PART III
ILLNESS, NOVELS, AND ITALY

CHAPTER XI

A DIFFICULT PERIOD; AND A CHANGE

1880-1881: *Act.* 40-41

THEY returned to London on October the 23rd—the very day *The Trumpet-Major* was published, Hardy feeling by this time very unwell, so unwell that he had to write and postpone an engagement or two, and decline an invitation to Fryston by Lord Houghton. On the Sunday after he was worse, and seeing the name of a surgeon on a brass plate opposite his house, sent for him. The surgeon came at once, and came again on that and the two or three succeeding days; he said that Hardy was bleeding internally. Mrs. Hardy, in her distress, called on their neighbours the Macmillans, to ask their opinion, and they immediately sent their own doctor. He agreed about the bleeding, said the case was serious; and that the patient was not to get up on any account.

Later it was supposed that a dangerous operation would be necessary, till the doctor inquired how long Hardy could lie in bed—could he lie there, if necessary, for months?—in which case there possibly need be no operation.

Now he had already written the early chapters of a story for *Harper's Magazine*—*A Laodicean*, which was to begin in the (nominally) December number, issued in November. This first part was already printed, and Du Maurier was illustrating it. The story had to go on somehow, it happening, unfortunately, that the number

containing it was the first number also of the publication of *Harper's* as an English and not exclusively American magazine as hitherto, and the success of its launch in London depended largely upon the serial tale. Its writer was, during the first few weeks, in considerable pain, and compelled to lie on an inclined plane with the lower part of his body higher than his head. Yet he felt determined to finish the novel, at whatever stress to himself—so as not to ruin the new venture of the publishers, and also in the interests of his wife, for whom as yet he had made but a poor provision in the event of his own decease. Accordingly from November onwards he began dictating it to her from the awkward position he occupied; and continued to do so—with greater ease as the pain and hæmorrhage went off. She worked bravely both at writing and nursing, till at the beginning of the following May a rough draft was finished by one shift and another.

“November 20. Freiherr von Tauchnitz Junior called.” This was probably about a Continental edition of *The Trumpet-Major*. But Hardy was still too ill to see him. *The Trumpet-Major*, however, duly appeared in the Tauchnitz series.

It is somewhat strange that at the end of November he makes a note of an intention to resume poetry as soon as possible. Having plenty of time to think he also projected as he lay what he calls a “Great Modern Drama”—which seems to have been a considerable advance on his first conception, in June 1875, of a Napoleonic chronicle in ballad form—a sequence of such making a lyrical whole. Yet it does not appear to have been quite the same in detail as that of *The Dynasts* later on. He also made the following irrelative note of rather vague import:

“Discover for how many years, and on how many occasions, the organism, Society, has been standing, lying, etc., in varied positions, as if it were a tree or a man hit by vicissitudes.

“There would be found these periods :

1. Upright, normal, or healthy periods.
2. Oblique or cramped periods.
3. Prostrate periods (intellect counterpoised by ignorance or narrowness, producing stagnation).
4. Drooping periods.
5. Inverted periods.”

George Eliot died during the winter in which he lay ill, and this set him thinking about Positivism, on which he remarks :

“If Comte had introduced Christ among the worthies in his calendar it would have made Positivism tolerable to thousands who, from position, family connection, or early education, now decry what in their heart of hearts they hold to contain the germs of a true system. It would have enabled them to modulate gently into the new religion by deceiving themselves with the sophistry that they still continued one-quarter Christians, or one-eighth, or one-twentieth, as the case might be : This as a matter of *policy*, without which no religion succeeds in making way.”

Also on literary criticism :

“Arnold is wrong about provincialism, if he means anything more than a provincialism of style and manner in exposition. A certain provincialism of feeling is invaluable. It is of the essence of individuality, and is largely made up of that crude enthusiasm without which no great thoughts are thought, no great deeds done.”

Some days later he writes :

“Romanticism will exist in human nature as long as human nature itself exists. The point is (in imaginative literature) to adopt that form of romanticism which is the mood of the age.”

Also on adversity—no doubt suggested by the distresses he was undergoing :

“There is mercy in troubles coming in battalions—they neutralize each other. Tell a man in prosperity that

he must suffer the amputation of a limb, and it is a horror to him; but tell him this the minute after he has been reduced to beggary and his only son has died: it hurts him but feebly."

"*January* 1881. My third month in bed. Driving snow: fine, and so fast that individual flakes cannot be seen. In sheltered places they occasionally stop, and balance themselves in the air like hawks. . . . It creeps into the house, the window-plants being covered as if out-of-doors. Our passage (downstairs) is sole-deep, Em says, and feet leave tracks on it."

(Same month.) "Style—Consider the Wordsworthian dictum (the more perfectly the natural object is reproduced, the more truly poetic the picture). This reproduction is achieved by seeing into the *heart of a thing* (as rain, wind, for instance), and is realism, in fact, though through being pursued by means of the imagination it is confounded with invention, which is pursued by the same means. It is, in short, reached by what M. Arnold calls 'the imaginative reason.'"

"*January* 30. Sunday. Dr. S. called as usual. I can by this time see all round his knowledge of my illness. He showed a lost manner on entering, as if among his many cases he had forgotten all about my case and me, which has to be revived in his mind by looking hard at me, when it all comes back.

"He told us of having been called in to an accident which, do the best he possibly could, would only end in discredit to him. A lady had fallen down, and so badly broken her wrist that it must always be deformed even after the most careful treatment. But, seeing the result, she would give him a bad name for want of skill in setting it. These cases often occur in a surgeon's practice, he says."

"*January* 31. Incidents of lying in bed for months. Skin gets fair: corns take their leave: feet and toes grow shapely as those of a Greek statue. Keys get rusty; watch

dim, boots mildewed; hat and clothes old-fashioned; umbrella eaten out with rust; children seen through the window are grown taller."

"*February 7.* Carlyle died last Saturday. Both he and George Eliot have vanished into nescience while I have been lying here."

"*February 17.* Conservatism is not estimable in itself, nor is Change, or Radicalism. To conserve the existing good, to supplant the existing bad by good, is to act on a true political principle, which is neither Conservative nor Radical."

"*February 21.* A. G. called. Explained to Em about Aerostation, and how long her wings would have to be if she flew,—how light her weight, etc., and the process generally of turning her into a flying person."

"*March 22.* Maggie Macmillan called. Sat with Em in my room—had tea. She and Em worked, watching the sun set gorgeously. That I should also be able to see it Miss Macmillan conceived the kind idea of reflecting the sun into my face by a looking-glass." [The incident was made use of in *Jude the Obscure* as a plan adopted by Sue when the schoolmaster was ill.]

"*March 27.* A Homeric Ballad, in which Napoleon is a sort of Achilles, to be written." [This entry, of a kind with earlier ones, is, however, superseded a few days later by the following:] "Mode for a historical Drama. Action mostly automatic; reflex movement, etc. Not the result of what is called *motive*, though always ostensibly so, even to the actors' own consciousness. Apply an enlargement of these theories to, say, 'The Hundred Days'!"

This note is, apparently, Hardy's first written idea of a philosophic scheme or framework as the larger feature of *The Dynasts*, enclosing the historic scenes.

On the 10th of April he went outside the door again for the first time since that October afternoon of the previous year when he returned from Cambridge, driving

out with his wife and the doctor. On the 19th occurred the death of Disraeli, whom Hardy had met twice, and found unexpectedly urbane. On Sunday the 1st of May he finished *A Laodicean* in pencil, and on the 3rd went with Mrs. Hardy by appointment to call on Sir Henry Thompson for a consultation.

"May 9. After infinite trying to reconcile a scientific view of life with the emotional and spiritual, so that they may not be interdestructive I come to the following:

"General Principles. Law has produced in man a child who cannot but constantly reproach its parent for doing much and yet not all, and constantly say to such parent that it would have been better never to have begun doing than to have *overdone* so indecisively; that is, than to have created so far beyond all apparent first intention (on the emotional side), without mending matters by a second intent and execution, to eliminate the evils of the blunder of overdoing. The emotions have no place in a world of defect, and it is a cruel injustice that they should have developed in it.

"If Law itself had consciousness, how the aspect of its creatures would terrify it, fill it with remorse!"

Though he had been out in vehicles it was not till a day early in May, more than six months after he had taken to his bed, that he went forth on foot alone; and it being a warm and sunny morning he walked on Wandsworth Common, where, as he used to tell, standing still he repeated out loud to himself:

See the wretch that long has tost
On the thorny bed of pain,
At length repair his vigour lost,
And breathe and walk again:

The meanest flowret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening Paradise.



Thomas Hardy

c 1880

Immediately on Hardy's recovery the question arose of whereabouts he and his wife should live. 'The three years' lease of the house at Upper Tooting had run out on the preceding Lady Day, when Hardy was too ill to change, and he had been obliged to apply for a three months' extension, which was granted. During the latter part of May they searched in Dorset, having concluded that it would be better to make London a place of sojourn for a few months only in each year, and establish their home in the country, both for reasons of health and for mental inspiration, Hardy finding, or thinking he found, that residence in or near a city tended to force mechanical and ordinary productions from his pen, concerning ordinary society-life and habits.

They found a little house called "Llanherne" in the Avenue, Wimborne, that would at any rate suit them temporarily, and till they could discover a better, or perhaps build one. Hardy makes a note that on June 25 they slept in Llanherne for the first time, and saw the new comet from the conservatory. "Our garden", he says a few days later, "has all sorts of old-fashioned flowers, in full bloom: Canterbury Bells, blue and white, and Sweet Williams of every variety, strawberries and cherries that are ripe, currants and gooseberries that are almost ripe, peaches that are green, and apples that are decidedly immature."

In July he jots down some notes on fiction, possibly for an article that was never written:

"The real, if unavowed, purpose of fiction is to give pleasure by gratifying the love of the uncommon in human experience, mental or corporeal.

"This is done all the more perfectly in proportion as the reader is illuded to believe the personages true and real like himself.

"Solely to this latter end a work of fiction should be a precise transcript of ordinary life: but,

"The uncommon would be absent and the interest lost. Hence,

"The writer's problem is, how to strike the balance between the uncommon and the ordinary so as on the one hand to give interest, on the other to give reality.

"In working out this problem, human nature must never be made abnormal, which is introducing incredibility. The uncommonness must be in the events, not in the characters; and the writer's art lies in shaping that uncommonness while disguising its unlikelihood, if it be unlikely."

On August 23rd Hardy and his wife left Wimborne for Scotland. Arriving at Edinburgh on the 24th, they discovered to their dismay that Queen Victoria was to review the Volunteers in that city on the very next day, and that they could get no lodging anywhere. They took train to Roslin and put up at the Royal Hotel there. At sight of the crowds in the city Hardy had made the entry: "There are, then, some Scotch people who stay at home."

The next day or two, though wet, they spent in viewing Roslin Castle and Chapel, and Hawthornden, the old man who showed them the castle saying that he remembered Sir Walter Scott. Returning to Edinburgh, now calm and normal, they stayed there a few days, and at the beginning of September went on to Stirling, where they were laid up with colds. They started again for Callander and the Trossachs, where Hardy made a sketch of Benvenue, and followed the usual route across Loch Katrine, by coach to Inversnaid, down Loch Lomond, and so on to Glasgow. On their way back they visited Windermere and Chester, returning through London to Wimborne.

During some sunny days in September Hardy corrected *A Laodicean* for the issue in volumes, sitting under the vine on their stable-wall, "which for want of training hangs in long arms over my head nearly to the ground. The sun tries to shine through the great leaves, making a

green light on the paper, the tendrils twisting in every direction, in gymnastic endeavours to find something to lay hold of."

Though they had expected to feel lonely in Wimborne after London, they were visited by many casual friends, were called in to Shakespeare readings, then much in vogue, and had a genial neighbour in the county-court judge, Tindal-Atkinson, one of the last of the Serjeants-at-Law, who took care they should not mope if dinners and his and his daughter's music could prevent it. They kept in touch with London, however, and were there in the following December, where they met various friends, and Hardy did some business in arranging for the publication in the *Atlantic Monthly* of a novel that he was about to begin writing, called off-hand by the title of *Two on a Tower*, a title he afterwards disliked, though it was much imitated. An amusing experience of formality occurred to him in connection with this novel. It was necessary that he should examine an observatory, the story moving in an astronomical medium, and he applied to the Astronomer Royal for permission to see Greenwich. He was requested to state before it could be granted if his application was made for astronomical and scientific reasons or not. He therefore drew up a scientific letter, the gist of which was that he wished to ascertain if it would be possible for him to adapt an old tower, built in a plantation in the west of England for other objects, to the requirements of a telescopic study of the stars by a young man very ardent in that pursuit (this being the imagined situation in the proposed novel). An order to view Greenwich Observatory was promptly sent.

The year was wound up by Hardy and his wife at a ball at Lady Wimborne's, Canford Manor, where he met Sir Henry Layard. Lord Wimborne in a conversation about the house complained that it was rendered damp by the miller below penning the water for grinding, and, on

Hardy's suggesting the removal of the mill, his host amused him by saying that was out of the question, because the miller paid him £50 a year in rent. However that might have been, Hardy felt glad the old mill was to remain, having as great a repugnance to pulling down a mill where (to use his own words) they ground food for the body, as to pulling down a church where they ground food for the soul.

Thus ended 1881—with a much brighter atmosphere for the author and his wife than the opening had shown.

CHAPTER XII

WIMBORNE AND "TWO ON A TOWER"

1882-1883: *Act.* 41-43

"*January* 26. Coleridge says, aim at *illusion* in audience or readers—*i.e.*, the mental state when dreaming, intermediate between complete *delusion* (which the French mistakenly aim at) and a clear perception of falsity."

"*February* 4 and 11. Shakespeare readings at —'s, 'The Tempest' being the play chosen. The host was omnivorous of parts—absorbing other people's besides his own, and was greedily vexed when I read a line of his part by mistake. When I praise his reading he tells me meditatively, 'Oh, yes; I've given it a deal of study—thrown myself into the life of the character, you know; thought of what my supposed parents were, and my early life.' The firelight shone out as the day diminished, the young girl N.P. crouching on a footstool, the wealthy Mrs. B. impassive and grand in her unintelligence, like a Carthaginian statue. . . . The General reads with gingerly caution, telling me privately that he blurted out one of Shakespeare's improprieties last time before he was aware, and is in fear and trembling lest he may do it again."

In this month's entries occurs another note which appears to be related to the philosophic scheme afterwards adopted as a framework for *The Dynasts*:

"*February* 16. Write a history of human automatism, or impulsion—viz., an account of human action in spite

of human knowledge, showing how very far conduct lags behind the knowledge that should really guide it."

A dramatization of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, prepared by Mr. J. Comyns Carr some months earlier, was produced during March at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Liverpool, and Hardy and his wife took the trouble to make a trip to Liverpool to be present. The play, with Miss Marion Terry as the heroine, was not sufficiently near the novel to be to Hardy's liking, but it was well received, and was staged in London at the Globe Theatre in April, where it ran for many nights, but brought Hardy no profit, nor the adapter, as he was informed. During his stay in London he attended, on April 26, the funeral of Darwin in Westminster Abbey. As a young man he had been among the earliest acclaimers of *The Origin of Species*.

"May 13. The slow meditative lives of people who live in habitual solitude. . . . Solitude rendersevery trivial act of a solitary full of interest, as showing thoughts that cannot be expressed for want of an interlocutor."

"June 3. . . . As, in looking at a carpet, by following one colour a certain pattern is suggested, by following another colour, another; so in life the seer should watch that pattern among general things which his idiosyncrasy moves him to observe, and describe that alone. This is, quite accurately, a going to Nature; yet the result is no mere photograph, but purely the product of the writer's own mind."

"June 18. M. F., son of Parson F., was well known by sight to my mother in her childhood. He had taken his degree and had been ordained. But he drank. He worked with the labourers and 'yarn-barton-wenches' (as they were called in the village) in the yarn-barton. After a rollick as they worked he would suddenly stop, down his implement, and mounting a log or trestle, preach an excellent sermon to them; then go on cursing and swearing

as before. He wore faded black clothes, and had an allowance of some small sum from his family, to which he liked to add a little by manual labour. He was a tall, upright, dignified man. She did not know what became of him."

"*August.* An ample theme: the intense interests, passions, and strategy that throb through the commonest lives.

"This month blackbirds and thrushes creep about under fruit-bushes and in other shady places in gardens rather like four-legged animals than birds. . . . I notice that a blackbird has eaten nearly a whole pear lying in the garden-path in the course of the day."

"*September 9.* Dr. and Mrs. Brine . . . came to tea. Brine says that Jack White's gibbet (near Wincanton) was standing as late as 1835—*i.e.* the oak-post with the iron arm sticking out, and a portion of the cage in which the body had formerly hung. It would have been standing now if some young men had not burnt it down by piling faggots round it one fifth of November."

Later in the month he went with Mrs. Hardy on a small circular tour in the adjoining counties—taking in Salisbury, Axminster, Lyme Regis, Charmouth, Bridport, Dorchester, and back to Wimborne. From Axminster to Lyme the journey on the coach was spoilt for them by the condition of one of the horses.

"The off-horse was weak and worn. 'O yes, tender on his vore veet', said the driver with nonchalance. The coach itself weighed a ton. The horse swayed, leant against the pole, then outwards. His head hung like his tail. The straps and brass rings of the harness seemed barbarously harsh on his shrinking skin. E., with her admirable courage, would have interfered, at the cost of walking the rest of the distance: then we felt helpless against the anger of the other passengers who wanted to get on." They were, in fact, on the tableland halfway between the two towns. But they complained when they alighted—with what effect Hardy could not remember.

At Lyme they "met a cheerful man who had turned his trousers hind part before, because the knees had worn through".

On The Cobb they encountered an old man who had undergone an operation for cataract:

"It was like a red-hot needle in yer eye whilst he was doing it. But he wasn't long about it. Oh no. If he had been long I couldn't ha' beared it. He wasn't a minute more than three-quarters of an hour at the outside. When he had done one eye, 'a said, 'Now my man, you must make shift with that one, and be thankful you bain't left wi' narn.' So he didn't do the other. And I'm glad 'a didn't. I've saved half-crowns and half-crowns out of number in only wanting one glass to my spectacles. T'other eye would never have paid the expenses of keeping en going."

From Charmouth they came to Bridport on the box of a coach better horsed, and driven by a merry coachman, "who wore a lavish quantity of wool in his ears, and in smiling checked his smile in the centre of his mouth by closing his lips, letting it continue at the corners". (A sketch of the coachman's mouth in the act of smiling was attached to illustrate this.)

Before returning to Wimborne Hardy called on the poet Barnes at Came Rectory. Mr. Barnes told him of an old woman who had asked him to explain a picture she possessed. He told her it was the family of Darius at the feet of Alexander. She shook her head, and said: "But that's not in the Bible", looking up and down his clerical attire as if she thought him a wicked old man who disgraced his cloth by speaking of profane history.

This autumn *Two on a Tower*, which was ending its career in the *Atlantic Monthly*, came out in three volumes, and at the beginning of October its author and his wife started for Cherbourg *viâ* Weymouth, and onward to Paris, where they took a little *appartement* of two bed-

rooms and a sitting room, near the left bank of the Seine. Here they stayed for some weeks, away from English and American tourists, roving about the city and to Versailles, studying the pictures at the Louvre and the Luxembourg, practising housekeeping in the Parisian bourgeois manner, buying their own groceries and vegetables, dining at restaurants, and catching bad colds owing to the uncertain weather. He seems to have done little in the French capital besides these things, making only one memorandum beyond personal trifles, expenses, and a few picture notes:

“Since I discovered, several years ago, that I was living in a world where nothing bears out in practice what it promises incipiently, I have troubled myself very little about theories. . . . Where development according to perfect reason is limited to the narrow region of pure mathematics, I am content with tentativeness from day to day.”

At the end of the autumn Mrs. Hardy received news at Wimborne of the death of her brother-in-law the Rev. C. Holder at St. Juliot Rectory, Cornwall, of which he had long been the incumbent; and they realized that the scene of the fairest romance of their lives, in the picturesque land of Lyonesse, would have no more kinship with them. By this loss Hardy was reminded of the genial and genuine humour of his clerical relative and friend despite his fragility and ill-health; of his qualities; among them, of a mysterious power he had (as it seemed to his brother-in-law) of counting his congregation to a man before he had got half-a-dozen lines down the page in “Dearly beloved brethren”; and of his many strange and amusing stories of his experiences, such as that of the sick man to whose bedside he was called to read a chapter in the Bible, and who said when it was ended that it did him almost as much good as a glass of gin-and-water: or of the astonishing entry in the marriage register of Holder’s

parish before he was rector, by which the bridegroom and bridesmaid had made themselves husband and wife, and the bride and best man the witnesses. Hardy himself had seen the entry.

Of another cast was the following. Holder as a young man was a curate in Bristol during the terrible cholera visitation. He related that one day at a friend's house he met a charming young widow, who invited him to call on her. With pleasant anticipations he went at tea-time a day or two later, and duly inquired if she was at home. The servant said with a strange face: "Why, Sir, you buried her this morning!" He found that amongst the many funerals of cholera victims he had conducted that day, as on every day, hers had been one.

At another of these funerals the clerk or sexton rushed to him immediately before the procession arrived to ask him to come and look at the just opened grave, which was of brick, with room for two or more, the first place being occupied by the coffin of the deceased person's husband, who had died three weeks before. The coffin was overturned into the space beside it. Holder hastily told the sexton to turn it back into its place, and say nothing, to avoid distressing the relatives by the obvious inference.

He also remembered a singular alarm to which he had once been subjected. He was roused one night by a voice calling from below, "Holder, Holder! Can you help me!" It was the voice of a neighbouring incumbent named Woodman, and wondering what terrible thing had happened he rushed downstairs as soon as he could, seizing a heavy stick on the way. He found his neighbour in great agitation, who explained that the news had come late the previous evening that a certain noble lord the patron, who was a great critic of sermons, had arrived in the parish, and was going to attend next morning's service. "Have you a sermon that will do? I have nothing—nothing!" The conjuncture had so preyed upon his

friend's nerves during the night that he had not been able to resist getting up and coming. Holder found something he thought might suit the noble critic, and Woodman departed with it under his arm, much relieved.

Some of Holder's stories to him were, as Hardy guessed, rather well-found than well-founded, but they were always told with much solemnity. Yet he would sometimes recount one "the truth of which he could not quite guarantee". It was what had been related to him by some of his aged parishioners concerning an incumbent of that or an adjacent living many years before. This worthy ecclesiastic was a bachelor addicted to drinking habits, and one night when riding up Boscastle Hill fell off his horse. He lay a few minutes in the road, when he said "Help me up, Jolly!" and a local man who was returning home behind him saw a dark figure with a cloven foot emerge from the fence, and toss him upon his horse in a jiffy. The end of him was that on one night of terrific lightning and thunder he was missed, and was found to have entirely disappeared.

Holder had kept up a friendly acquaintance with Hawker of Morwenstow, who predeceased him by seven years, though the broad and tolerant views of the rector of St. Juliot did not quite chime in with the poet-vicar's precisianism; and the twenty miles of wild Cornish coast that separated their livings was a heavy bit of road for the rector's stout cob to traverse both ways in a day. Hardy regretted the loss of his relative, and was reminded sadly of the pleasure he used to find in reading the lessons in the ancient church when his brother-in-law was not in vigour. The poem "Quid hic agis?" in *Moments of Vision* is in part apparently a reminiscence of these readings.

In December Hardy was told a story by a Mrs. Cross, a very old country-woman he met, of a girl she had known who had been betrayed and deserted by a lover. She kept her child by her own exertions, and lived bravely and

throve. After a time the man returned poorer than she, and wanted to marry her; but she refused. He ultimately went into the Union workhouse. The young woman's conduct in not caring to be "made respectable" won the novelist-poet's admiration, and he wished to know her name; but the old narrator said, "Oh, never mind their names! they be dead and rotted by now."

The eminently modern idea embodied in this example—of a woman's not becoming necessarily the chattel and slave of her seducer—impressed Hardy as being one of the first glimmers of woman's enfranchisement; and he made use of it in succeeding years in more than one case in his fiction and verse.

In the same month the Hardys attended Ambulance-Society lectures—First-Aid teaching being in fashion just then. He makes a note concerning a particular lecture:

"A skeleton—the one used in these lectures—is hung up inside the window. We face it as we sit. Outside the band is playing, and the children are dancing. I can see their little figures through the window past the skeleton dangling in front."

Another note—this on the wintry weather:

"Heard of an open cart being driven through the freezing rain. The people in it became literally packed in ice; the men's beards and hair were hung with icicles. Getting one of the men into the house was like bringing in a chandelier of lustres."

In the same month he replied as follows to a question asked him by letter:

"To A. A. Reade, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,

"I can say that I have never found alcohol helpful to literary production in any degree. My experience goes to prove that the effect of wine, taken as a preliminary to imaginative work, as it is called, is to blind the writer to

the quality of what he produces rather than to raise its quality.

"When walking much out of doors, and particularly when on Continental rambles, I occasionally drink a glass or two of claret or mild ale. The German beers seem really beneficial at these times of exertion, which (as wine seems otherwise) may be owing to some alimentary qualities they possess apart from their stimulating property. With these rare exceptions I have taken no alcoholic liquor for the last two years.

"Yours truly,

"T. HARDY."

"February 25, 1883. Sent a short hastily written novel to the *Graphic* for Summer Number," [It was *The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid*.]

"February 28. Walked with Walter Fletcher (County Surveyor) to Corfe Mullen. He says that the scene of the auction of turnpike tolls used to be curious. It was held at an inn, and at one end of the room would be the auctioneer and trustees, at the other a crowd of strange beings, looking as not worth sixpence among them. Yet the biddings for the Poole Trust would sometimes reach £1400. Sometimes the bidders would say, 'Beg yer pardon, gentlemen, but will you wait to let us step outside a minute or two?' Perhaps the trustees would say they could not. The men would say, 'then we'll step out without your letting us'. On their return only one or two would bid, and the peremptory trustees be nettled.

"Passed a lonely old house formerly an inn. The road-contractor now living there showed us into the stable, and drew our attention to the furthest stall. When the place was an inn, he said, it was the haunt of smugglers, and in a quarrel there one night a man was killed in that stall. If an old horse is put there on certain nights, at about two in the morning (when the smuggler died) the horse cries

like a child, and on entering you find him in a lather of sweat.

"The huge chestnut tree which stood in front of this melancholy house is dead, but the trunk is left standing. In it are still the hooks to which horses were fastened by the reins while their owners were inside."

"*March 13.* M. writes to me that when a farmer at Puddlehinton who did not want rain found that a neighbouring farmer had sent to the parson to pray for it, and it had come, he went and abused the other farmer, and told him 'twas a very dirty trick of his to catch God A'mighty unawares, and he ought to be ashamed of it.

"Our servant Ann brings us a report, which has been verified, that the carpenter who made a coffin for Mr. W. who died the other day, made it too short. A bystander said satirically, 'Anybody would think you'd made it for yourself, John!' (the carpenter was a short man). The maker said, 'Ah—they would!' and fell dead instantly."

In reply to a letter from Miss Mary Christie:

"WIMBORNE, *April 11*, 1883.

"DEAR MADAM,

"I have read with great interest the account of your scheme for encouraging a feeling for art in National schools, and if my name be of any service in support of the general proposition, I willingly consent to your using it. As to the details of such a scheme, my views differ somewhat from your own. For instance, I think for children between 9 and 12 or 13—the great mass of those in elementary schools—fairly good engravings, such as those in the *Graphic*, *Illustrated News*, etc., (not the coloured pictures) to be as conducive to the end desired as more finished pictures and photographs. A child's imagination is so powerful that it only requires the idea to set it to work: and hence a dozen suggestions of scenes and per-

sons by as many prints would seem to me to be of more value to him or her than the perfect representation of one,—while the latter would cost as much as the former. This, however, is altogether a secondary point, and I daresay that if we were to talk over the subject we should soon be quite at one about it. . . .”

Hardy and his wife were in London off and on during May and June, seeing pictures, plays, and friends. At a lunch at Lord Houghton's, who with his sister Lady Galway had taken a small house off Park Lane for this season, Hardy met Robert Browning again, Rhoda Broughton for the first time, and several others, including Mrs. — from America, “a large-eyed lady-owner of ten serial publications, which, she told me, she called her ten children. Also Lady C. who talked to me about Rabelais—without knowledge obviously—having heard that I belonged to the Rabelais Club. She said she meant to read him through. She had read one chapter, but couldn't get on with the old French, so was looking for a literal translation. Heaven bless her reading!

“Houghton, seeing Browning about to introduce me to Rhoda Broughton, hastened forward before Browning, and emphatically introduced us with the manner of a man who means to see things properly done in his own house; then walked round, pleased with himself as the company dropped in; like one who, having set a machinery in motion, has now only to wait and observe how it goes.”

“*June 24. Sunday.* Went in the afternoon to see Mrs. Procter at Albert Hall Mansions. Found Browning present. He told me that Mrs. —, whom he and I had met at Lord Houghton's, had made £200,000 by publishing pirated works of authors who had made comparatively nothing. Presently Mrs. Sutherland Orr and Mrs. Frank Hill (*Daily News*) came in. Also two Jewesses—the

Misses Lazarus—from America. Browning tried the elder with Hebrew, and she appeared to understand so well that he said he perceived she knew the tongue better than he. When these had gone George Smith [the publisher] called. He and Mrs. Procter declared that there was something tender between Mrs. Orr and Browning. 'Why don't they settle it!' said Mrs. P.

"In the evening went to the Irving dinner. Sir Frederick Pollock, who took the chair, and made a speech, said that the departure of Irving for America would be a loss that would eclipse the gaiety of nations (!) Irving in his reply said that in the twenty-seven years he had been on the stage he had enacted 650 different characters.

"*June 25.* Dined at the Savile with Gosse. Met W. D. Howells of New York there. He told me a story of Emerson's loss of memory. At the funeral of Longfellow he had to make a speech. 'The brightness and beauty of soul', he began, 'of him we have lost, has been acknowledged wherever the English language is spoken. I've known him these forty years; and no American, whatever may be his opinions, will deny that in—in—I can't remember the gentleman's name—beat the heart of a true poet.'

"Howells said that Mark Twain usually makes a good speech. But once he heard him fail. In his speech he was telling a story of an occasion when he was in some western city, and found that some impostors personating Longfellow, Emerson, and others had been there. Mark began to describe these impostors, and while doing it found that Longfellow, Emerson, etc. were present, listening, and, from a titter or two, found also that his satirical description of the impostors was becoming regarded as an oblique satirical description of the originals. He was over-spread by a sudden cold chill, and struggled to a lame ending. He was so convinced that he had given offence that he wrote to Emerson and Longfellow, apologizing.

Emerson could not understand the letter, his memory of the incident having failed him, and wrote to Mark asking what it meant. Then Mark had to tell him what he wished he had never uttered; and altogether the fiasco was complete."

CHAPTER XIII

THE COUNTY TOWN

1883-1885: *Act.* 43-45

IN this month of June the Hardys removed from Wimborne to Dorchester, which town and its neighbourhood, though they did not foresee it, was to be their country-quarters for the remainder of their lives. But several months of each spring and summer were to be spent in London during the ensuing twenty years, and occasionally spells abroad. This removal to the county town, and later to a spot a little outside it, was a step they often regretted having taken; but the bracing air brought them health and renewed vigour, and in the long run it proved not ill-advised.

"*July* 19. In future I am not going to praise things because the accumulated remarks of ages say they are great and good, if those accumulated remarks are not based on observation. And I am not going to condemn things because a pile of accepted views raked together from tradition, and acquired by instillation, say antecedently that they are bad."

"*July* 22. To Winterborne-Came Church with Gosse, to hear and see the poet Barnes. Stayed for sermon. Barnes, knowing we should be on the watch for a prepared sermon, addressed it entirely to his own flock, almost pointedly excluding us. Afterwards walked to the rectory and looked at his pictures.

"Poetry versus reason: *e.g.*, A band plays 'God save

the Queen', and being musical the uncompromising Republican joins in the harmony: a hymn rolls from a church-window, and the uncompromising No-God-ist or Unconscious God-ist takes up the refrain."

Mr. T. W. H. Tolbort, a friend of Hardy's from youth, and a pupil of Barnes's, who years earlier had come out at the top in the Indian Civil Service examination, died at the beginning of the next month, after a bright and promising career in India, and Hardy wrote an obituary notice of him in the *Dorset Chronicle*. The only note Hardy makes on him in addition to the printed account is as follows:

"August 13. Tolbort lived and studied as if everything in the world were so very much worth while. But what a bright mind has gone out at one-and-forty!"

He writes elsewhere of an anecdote told him by Barnes touching his tuition of Tolbort. Barnes had relinquished his school and retired to the country rectory in which he ended his days, when Tolbort's name, and Barnes's as his schoolmaster, appeared in *The Times* at the head of the Indian examination list, a wide proportion of marks separating it from the name following. It was in the early days when these lists excited great interest. In a few mornings Barnes was deluged with letters from all parts of the country requesting him at almost any price to take innumerable sons, and produce upon them the same successful effect. "I told them that it took two to do it," he would say, adding sadly that a popularity which would have been invaluable during the hard-working years of his life came at almost the first moment when it was no longer of use to him.

In this month of August he made a memorandum on another matter:

"Write a list of things which everybody thinks and nobody says; and a list of things that everybody says and nobody thinks."

At this time too Hardy encountered an old man named

P——, whose father, or grandfather, had been one of the keepers of the Rainbarrows' Beacon, 1800-1815, as described in *The Dynasts*, the remains of whose hut are still to be seen on the spot. It may be interesting to mention that the daughter of a travelling waxwork proprietor had some years before when exhibiting at Puddletown entirely lost her heart to P——'s brother, a handsome young labourer of the village, and he had married her. As her father grew old and infirm the son-in-law and his wife succeeded to the showman's business and carried it on successfully. They were a worthy and happy couple, and whenever in their rounds they came to P——'s native village the husband's old acquaintance were admitted gratis to the exhibition, which was of a highly moral and religious cast, including Solomon's Judgment, and Daniel in the Den of Lions, where the lions moved their heads, tails, eyes, and paws terrifically, while Daniel lifted his hands in prayer. Heads of murderers were ranged on the other side, as a wholesome lesson to evildoers. Hardy duly attended the show because the man's forefather had kept Rainbarrows' Beacon (described in *The Dynasts*); and the last he saw of old P—— was in the private tent attached to the exhibition, where he was sitting as a glorified figure drinking gin-and-water with his relatives.

Not having been able when he came to Dorchester to find a house to suit him, Hardy had obtained a plot of land of the Duchy of Cornwall in Fordington Field, about a mile into the country, on which to build one; and at the beginning of October marked out as a preliminary the spot where the well was to be sunk. The only drawback to the site seemed to him to be its newness. But before the well-diggers had got deeper than three feet they came upon Romano-British urns and skeletons. Hardy and his wife found the spot was steeped in antiquity, and thought the omens gloomy; but they did not prove so, the extreme age of the relics dissipating any sense of gruesomeness. More

of the sort were found in digging the house-foundations, and Hardy wrote an account of the remains, which he read at the Dorchester Meeting of the Dorset Field Club, 1884. It was printed in the "Proceedings" of the Club in 1890.

"*November 3.* *The Athenæum* says 'The glass-stainer maintains his existence at the sacrifice of everything the painter holds dear. In place of the freedom and sweet abandonment which is Nature's own charm and which the painter can achieve, the glass-stainer gives us splendour as luminous as that of the rainbow . . . in patches, and stripes, and bars.' The above canons are interesting in their conveyance of a half truth. All art is only approximate—not exact, as the reviewer thinks; and hence the methods of all art differ from that of the glass-stainer but in degree."

"*November 17.* Poem. We [human beings] have reached a degree of intelligence which Nature never contemplated when framing her laws, and for which she consequently has provided no adequate satisfactions." [This, which he had adumbrated before, was clearly the germ of the poem entitled "The Mother Mourns" and others.]

"*December 23.* There is what we used to call 'The Birds' Bedroom' in the plantation at Bockhampton. Some large hollies grow among leafless ash, oak, birch, etc. At this time of year the birds select the hollies for roosting in, and at dusk noises not unlike the creaking of withy-chairs arise, with a busy rustling as of people going to bed in a lodging-house; accompanied by sundry shakings, adjustings, and pattings, as if they were making their beds vigorously before turning in.

"Death of old Billy C—— at a great age. He used to talk enthusiastically of Lady Susan O'Brien [the daughter of Lord Ilchester, who excited London by eloping with O'Brien the actor, as so inimitably described in Walpole's *Letters*, and who afterwards settled in the Hardys' parish as beforementioned].—'She kept a splendid house—a cellar-

ful of home-brewed strong beer that would a'most knock you down; everybody drank as much as he liked. The head-gardener [whom Billy as a youth assisted] was drunk every morning before breakfast. There are no such houses now! On wet days we used to make a point of working opposite the drawing-room window, that she might pity us. She would send out and tell us to go indoors, and not expose ourselves to the weather so reckless.'” [A kind-hearted woman, Lady Susan.]

On the eve of the New Year 1884 Hardy planted some trees on his new property at Max Gate, Dorchester, and passed part of the January following in London, where he saw Henry James, Gosse, and Thornycroft, and talked to Alma-Tadema about the Anglo-Roman remains he was finding on the site of his proposed house, over which discovery Tadema was much excited, as he was painting, or about to paint, a picture expressing the art of that date.

“*February.* ‘Ye shall weep and mourn, and the world shall rejoice.’ Such shows the natural limitation of the Christian view when the Christians were a small and despised community. The widened view of nowadays perceives that the world weeps and mourns all round.—Nevertheless, if ‘the world’ denotes the brutal and thoughtless merely, the text is eternally true.”

“James S—— [the quaint old man already mentioned, who worked forty years for Hardy’s father, and had been a smuggler], once heard a hurdlemaker bet at the ‘Black Dog’, Broadmayne, that he would make a hurdle sooner than the other man (not a hurdler) could pull one to pieces. They put it to the test, and the hurdlemaker won the stakes.

“When trees and underwood are cut down, and the ground bared, three crops of flowers follow. First a sheet of yellow; they are primroses. Then a sheet of blue; they are wild hyacinths, or as we call them, graegles. Then a sheet of red; they are ragged robins, or as they are called

here, robin-hoods. What have these plants been doing through the scores of years before the trees were felled, and how did they come there?"

"*March*. Write a novel entitled *Time against Two*, in which the antagonism of the parents of a Romeo and Juliet *does* succeed in separating the couple and stamping out their love,—alas, a more probable development than the other!" [The idea is briefly used in *The Well-Beloved*.]

March or *April*. "Every error under the sun seems to arise from thinking that you are right yourself because you *are* yourself, and other people wrong because they are not you.

"It is now spring; when, according to the poets, birds pipe, and (the householder adds) day-labourers get independent after their preternatural civility through the frost and snow."

"*April* 26. Curious scene. A fine poem in it:

"Four girls—itinerant musicians—sisters, have been playing opposite Parmiter's in the High Street. The eldest had a fixed, old, hard face, and wore white roses in her hat. Her eyes remained on one close object, such as the buttons of her sister's dress; she played the violin. The next sister, with red roses in her hat, had rather bold dark eyes, and a coquettish smirk. She too played a violin. The next, with her hair in ringlets, beat the tambourine. The youngest, a mere child, dinged the triangle. She wore a bead necklace. All wore large brass earrings like Jews' harps, which dangled to the time of the jig.

"I saw them again in the evening, the silvery gleams from Saunders's [silver-smith's] shop shining out upon them. They were now sublimed to a wondrous charm. The hard face of the eldest was flooded with soft solicitous thought; the coquettish one was no longer bold but archly tender; her dirty white roses were pure as snow; her sister's red ones a fine crimson: the brass earrings were golden; the iron triangle silver; the tambourine Miriam's

own; the third child's face that of an angel; the fourth that of a cherub. The pretty one smiled on the second, and began to play 'In the gloaming', the little voices singing it. *Now* they were what Nature made them, before the smear of 'civilization' had sullied their existences." [An impression of a somewhat similar scene is given in the poem entitled "Music in a Snowy Street".]

"Rural low life may reveal coarseness of considerable leaven; but that libidinousness which makes the scum of cities so noxious is not usually there."

"*June 2.* At Bockhampton. My birthday—44. Alone in the plantation, at 9 o'clock. A weird hour: strange faces and figures formed by dying lights. Holm leaves shine like human eyes, and the sky glimpses between the trunks are like white phantoms and cloven tongues. It is so silent and still that a footstep on the dead leaves could be heard a quarter of a mile off. Squirrels run up the trunks in fear, stamping and crying 'chut-chut-chut!'" [There is not a single squirrel in that plantation now.]

The following letter was written to Hardy on his birthday:

"BURFORD BRIDGE,
"BOX HILL,
"June 2, 1884.

"What a good day this was for Anne Benson Procter, when Thomas Hardy was born! She little knew what stores of delightful reading she would owe to the Baby of 1840.

"If she could write an Ode—or, even worse, a Sonnet!

"He has something to be thankful for. He *must* have read the verses—and he is so good and kind that he would have praised them.

"We go home on Wednesday next, having been here for ten days—sitting by the fire, for the summer comes slowly up this way.

Your old admirer,
"ANNE B. PROCTER."

"*June* 3. The leaves are approaching their finished summer shape, the evergreens wear new pale suits over the old deep attire. I watered the thirsty earth at Max Gate, which drank in the liquid with a swallowing noise. In the evening I entered Tayleure's Circus in Fordington Field for a short time during the performance. There is a dim haze in the tent, and the green grass in the middle, within the circular horse-track, looks amazingly fresh in the artificial light. The damp orbits of the spectators' eyes gleam in its rays. The clowns, when 'off', lounge and smoke cigarettes, and chat with serious cynicism, and as if the necessity of their occupation to society at large were not to be questioned, their true domestic expression being visible under the official expression given by the paint. This sub-expression is one of good-humoured pain."

Hardy seems to have had something of a craze for circuses in these years, and went to all that came to Dorchester. In one performance the equestrienne who leapt through hoops on her circuit missed her footing and fell with a thud on the turf. He followed her into the dressing-tent, and became deeply interested in her recovery. The incident seems to have some bearing on the verses of many years after entitled "Circus-Rider to Ring-master".

They were in London part of June and July, and among other places went to an evening party at Alma-Tadema's, meeting an artistic crowd which included Burne-Jones; and to another at Mrs. Murray Smith's with Mrs. Procter, where they met again Matthew Arnold, whom Hardy liked better now than he did at their first meeting; also Du Maurier; also Henry James "with his nebulous gaze". Mrs. Procter, though so old, "swam about through the crowd like a swan".

Of Madame Judic's acting in *Niniche*, Hardy says, "This woman has genius. The picture of the pair of them

—Judic and Lassouche—putting their faces side by side and bumping each other in making love, was the most comic phase of real art I ever saw. . . . And yet the world calls —— a great actress.”

“*July* 14. Assizes. Dorchester—The Lord Chief Justice, eminent counsel, etc., reveal more of their weaknesses and vanities here in the country than in London. Their foibles expand, being off their guard. A shabby lad on trial for setting fire to a common, holds an amusingly familiar conversation with the C. J. (Coleridge) when asked if he has anything to say. Witnesses always begin their evidence in sentences containing ornamental words, evidently prepared beforehand, but when they get into the thick of it this breaks down to struggling grammar and lamentably jumbled narrative.”

“*August* 14. Strolling players at Dorchester in the market-field. Went to *Othello*. A vermillion sunset fell on the west end of the booth, where, while the audience assembled, Cassio, in supposed Venetian costume, was lounging and smoking in the red light at the bottom of the van-steps behind the theatre: *Othello* also lounging in the same sunlight on the grass by the stage door, and touching up the black of his face.

“The play begins as the dusk comes on, the theatre-lights within throwing the spectators’ and the actors’ profiles on the canvas, so that they are visible outside, and the immortal words spread through it into the silence around, and to the trees, and stars.

“I enter. A woman plays Montano, and her fencing with Cassio leaves much to the imagination. Desdemona’s face still retains its anxiety about the supper that she had been cooking a few minutes earlier in the stove without.

“*Othello* is played by the proprietor, and his speeches can be heard as far as to the town-pump. Emilia wears the earrings I saw her wearing when buying the family vegetables this morning. The tragedy goes on successfully,

till the audience laughs at the beginning of the murder scene. Othello stops, and turning, says sternly to them after an awful pause: 'Is this the Nineteenth Century?' The conscience-stricken audience feel the justice of the reproof, and preserve an abashed silence as he resumes. When he comes to the pillow-scene they applaud with tragic vehemence, to show that their hearts are in the right place after all."

August 16. Hardy took a trip to the Channel Islands from Weymouth with his brother. They went to Guernsey, Jersey, and Sark; and at one of the hotels found that every man there except themselves was a commercial traveller. As they seemed so lonely they were allowed to dine with these gentlemen, and became very friendly with them. Manners at the dinner-table were highly ceremonious: "Can I send you a cut of this boiled mutton, Mr. President?" "No thank you, Mr. Vice. May I help you to beef?" At the end of dinner: "Gentlemen, you can leave the table." Chorus of diners: "Thank you, Mr. President."

Conversation turned on a certain town in England, and it was defined as being a "warm place". Hardy, who had lived there, was puzzled, and said he had not noticed that it was particularly warm. The speaker scarcely condescended to reply that he did not understand the meaning they attached to the word.

Off and on he was now writing *The Mayor of Casterbridge*; but before leaving London he agreed with the Macmillans to take in hand later a story of twelve numbers for their magazine, no time being fixed. It came out two years later under the title of *The Woodlanders*.

"*October 20.* Query: Is not the present quasi-scientific system of writing history mere charlatanism? Events and tendencies are traced as if they were rivers of voluntary activity, and courses reasoned out from the circumstances in which natures, religions, or what-not, have found

themselves. But are they not in the main the outcome of *passivity*—acted upon by unconscious propensity?"

"*November* 16. My sister Mary says that women of the past generation have faces now out of fashion. Face-expressions have their fashions like clothes."

During the general election about this time Mr. John Morley wrote to Hardy from Newcastle:

"Your letter recalls literature, art, and sober reason—visitants as welcome as they are rare in the heats of electioneering." And a few days later he heard from Professor Beesly, who had been beaten at the Westminster poll: "I suppose there is not a more hopeless seat in England. We might have made head against its Toryism alone, or the clergy, or the Baroness's legitimate influence from her alms-giving of old date there (it being her special preserve), or the special tap of philanthropy turned on for the occasion. But all united were much too strong for us. . . . I return to my work in much contentment."

Leslie Stephen (like Hardy himself, quite outside politics) wrote the same week: "I am glad to have got that book off my hands, though any vacuum in my occupations is very soon filled up (not that *my* nature abhors it!) and though in many ways I am very ill-satisfied with the result. However I meant well, and I can now begin to forget it."

"*December* 4. A gusty wind makes the raindrops hit the windows in stars, and the sunshine flaps open and shut like a fan, flinging into the room a tin-coloured light. . . .

"Conjurer Mynterne [of whom mention has already been made] when consulted by Patt P—— (a strapping handsome woman), told her that her husband would die on a certain day, and showed her the funeral in a glass of water. She said she could see the bearers moving along. She made her mourning. She used to impress all this on her inoffensive husband, and assure him that he would go to hell if he made the conjurer a liar. He didn't, but died

on the day foretold. Oddly enough she never married again."

"*December 31.* To St. Peter's belfry to the New-Year's-Eve ringing. The night-wind whiffed in through the louvres as the men prepared the mufflers with tar-twine and pieces of horse-cloth. Climbed over the bells to fix the mufflers. I climbed with them and looked into the tenor bell: it is worn into a bright pit where the clapper has struck it so many years, and the clapper is battered with its many blows.

"The ringers now put their coats and waistcoats and hats upon the chimes and clock and stand to. Old John is fragile, as if the bell would pull him up rather than he pull the rope down, his neck being withered and white as his white neckcloth. But his manner is severe as he says, 'Tenor out?' One of the two tenor men gently eases the bell forward—that fine old E flat [?] (probably D in modern sharpened pitch), my father's admiration, unsurpassed in metal all the world over—and answers, 'Tenor's out'. Then old John tells them to 'Go!' and they start. Through long practice he rings with the least possible movement of his body, though the youngest ringers—strong, dark-haired men with ruddy faces—soon perspire with their exertions. The red, green and white sallies bolt up through the holes like rats between the huge beams overhead.

"The grey stones of the fifteenth-century masonry have many of their joints mortarless, and are carved with many initials and dates. On the sill of one louvred window stands a great pewter pot with a hinged cover and engraved: 'For the use of the ringers 16—'" [It is now in the County Museum.]

In the early part of the next year (1885) Hardy accepted a long-standing invitation to Eggesford by his friend Lady Portsmouth, whither he was to bring his work and continue it as if at home, but Mrs. Hardy was unable to

accompany him. He found her there surrounded by her daughters, and their cousin Lady Winifred Herbert, afterwards Lady Burghclere; making altogether a lively house-party, Lady Portsmouth apologizing for its being mostly composed of "better halves". Hence, though the library was placed at his disposal, and entry forbidden, that his labours should not be interrupted, very little work indeed was done while he stayed there, most of the time being spent in driving about the villages with his hosts and walking in the Park. Lord Portsmouth he found to be "a farmer-like man with a broad Devon accent. He showed me a bridge over which bastards were thrown and drowned, even down to quite recent times." Lady Dorothea, one of the daughters, told him of some of the escapades of her uncle Auberon Herbert—whom Hardy afterwards got to know very well—one of the most amusing being how he had personated a groom of his father's at a Drawing-room, and by that trick got to see a flame of his who was to be there. Altogether they were an extraordinarily sympathetic group of women, and among other discussions was, of course, one on love, in which Lady Camilla informed him that "a woman is never so near being in love with a man she does not love as immediately he has left her after she has refused him".

"Lady P. tells me she never knew real anxiety till she had a family of daughters. She wants us to come to Devonshire and live near them. She says they would find a house for us. Cannot think why we live in benighted Dorset. Em would go willingly, as it is her native county; but alas, my house at Dorchester is nearly finished."

"*Easter Sunday*. Evidences of art in Bible narratives. They are written with a watchful attention (though disguised) as to their effect on their reader. Their so-called simplicity is, in fact, the simplicity of the highest cunning. And one is led to inquire, when even in these latter days artistic development and arrangement are the

qualities least appreciated by readers, who was there likely to appreciate the art in these chronicles at that day?

"Looking round on a well-selected shelf of fiction or history, how few stories of any length does one recognize as well told from beginning to end! The first half of this story, the last half of that, the middle of another. . . . The modern art of narration is yet in its infancy.

"But in these Bible lives and adventures there is the spherical completeness of perfect art. And our first, and second, feeling that they must be true because they are so impressive, becomes, as a third feeling, modified to, 'Are they so very true, after all?' Is not the fact of their being so convincing an argument, not for their actuality, but for the actuality of a consummate artist who was no more content with what Nature offered than Sophocles and Pheidias were content?"

"*Friday, April 17.* Wrote the last page of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, begun at least a year ago, and frequently interrupted in the writing of each part."

"*April 19.* The business of the poet and novelist is to show the sorriness underlying the grandest things, and the grandeur underlying the sorriest things."

He was in London at the end of April, and probably saw Leslie Stephen there, since he makes the following remark: "Leslie Stephen as a critic. His approval is disapproval minimized."

They went to the Academy this year as usual. On the Private View Hardy remarks: "The great difference between a Private View and a public one is the loud chatter that prevails at the former, everybody knowing everybody else." In the evening of the same day they were at a party at Lady Carnarvon's, where Hardy met Lord Salisbury for the first time, and had an interesting talk with him on the art of making speeches—"whether it is best to plunge *in medias res*, or to adopt a developing method". In the middle of May they were at another of these parties of

Lady Carnarvon's, where they met Browning again; also Mrs. Jeune (afterwards Lady St. Helier), and the usual friends whom they found there.

"*May 28.* Waiting at the Marble Arch while Em called a little way further on. . . . This hum of the wheel—the roar of London! What is it composed of? Hurry, speech, laughter, moans, cries of little children. The people in this tragedy laugh, sing, smoke, toss off wines, etc., make love to girls in drawing-rooms and areas; and yet are playing their parts in the tragedy just the same. Some wear jewels and feathers, some wear rags. All are caged birds; the only difference lies in the size of the cage. This too is part of the tragedy."

"*Sunday May 31.* Called on Mrs. Procter. Shocked to find her in mourning for Edith. Can't tell why I did not see announcement of her death. Browning also present.

"Mrs. Procter was vexed with Browning and myself for sending cards to Victor Hugo's funeral to attach to wreaths."

At one of these crushes in the early part of 1885 they found themselves on a particular evening amid a simmer of political excitement. It was supposed to be a non-political "small-and-early", but on their arrival the house was already full to overflowing; and a well-known Conservative peeress of that date, who had lately invited Hardy to her friendship, came up to him as if she must express her feelings to somebody, and said, "I'm ashamed of my party! They are actually all hoping that General Gordon is murdered, in order that it may ruin Gladstone!" It seems to have been this rumour of Gordon's death, which had just been circulated, that had brought so many brilliant and titled people there. Auberon Herbert, who was also there, told Hardy privately that it was true. Presently another and grimmer lady, the Dowager Viscountess Galway, said to him that she half-believed Gordon was

still alive, because no relic, bloody rag, or any scrap of him had been produced, which from her experience of those countries she knew to be almost the invariable custom. So the crowd waited, and conjectured, and did not leave till a late hour, the truth as to Gordon's fate not being generally known till some days after.

It must have been his experiences at these nominally social but really political parties that gave rise to the following note at the same date:

"History is rather a stream than a tree. There is nothing organic in its shape, nothing systematic in its development. It flows on like a thunderstorm-rill by a road side; now a straw turns it this way, now a tiny barrier of sand that. The offhand decision of some commonplace mind high in office at a critical moment influences the course of events for a hundred years. Consider the evenings at Lord Carnarvon's, and the intensely average conversation on politics held there by average men who two or three weeks later were members of the Cabinet. A row of shopkeepers in Oxford Street taken just as they came would conduct the affairs of the nation as ably as these.

"Thus, judging by bulk of effect, it becomes impossible to estimate the intrinsic value of ideas, acts, material things: we are forced to appraise them by the curves of their career. There were more beautiful women in Greece than Helen; but what of them?

"What Ruskin says as to the cause of the want of imagination in works of the present age is probably true—that it is the flippant sarcasm of the time. 'Men dare not open their hearts to us if we are to broil them on a thorn fire.'"

At the end of the month of June Hardy was obliged to go down to Dorset to superintend the removal of his furniture from the house he had temporarily taken in Dorchester to the one he had built in the fields at Max Gate, a mile out of the town.

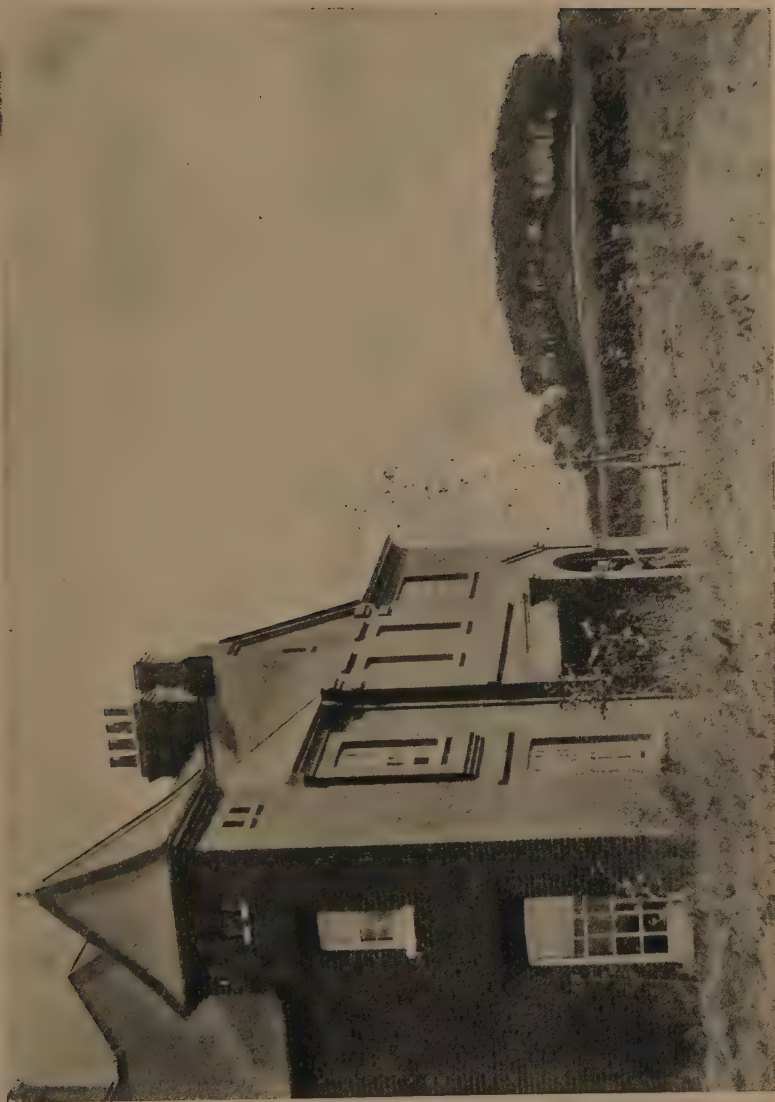
This house, one mile east of Dorchester, had been about eighteen months in building, commencing November 26, 1883, during which time Hardy was constantly overlooking operations. The plot of ground, which he bought from the Duchy of Cornwall, was $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres in extent, and nearly forty years later another half-acre was added to the garden.

A visitor to Max Gate in 1886 gives the following description :

"The house that is, from its position, almost the first object in the neighbourhood to catch the sun's morning rays, and the last to relinquish the evening glow, is approached . . . along the Wareham road across an open down. From this side the building appears as an unpretending red-brick structure of moderate size, somewhat quaintly built, and standing in a garden which is divided from the upland without by an enclosing wall. . . . The place is as lonely as it is elevated ; and it is evident that from the narrow windows of a turret which rises at the salient angle an extensive view of the surrounding country may be obtained.

"From the white entrance gate in the wall a short drive, planted on the windward side with beech and sycamore, leads up to the house, arrivals being notified to the inmates by the voice of a glossy black setter [Moss], who comes into view from the stable at the back as far as his chain will allow him. Within, we find ourselves in a small square hall, floored with dark polished wood, and resembling rather a cosy sitting-room with a staircase in it than a hall as commonly understood. It is lighted by a window of leaded panes, through which may be seen Conygar Hill, Came Plantation, and the elevated seamark of Culliford Tree."

Some two or three thousand small trees, mostly Austrian pines, were planted around the house by Hardy himself, and in later years these grew so thickly that the



MAX GATE, WHEN FIRST BUILT

house was almost entirely screened from the road, and finally appeared, in summer, as if at the bottom of a dark green well of trees.

To the right of the front door upon entering is the drawing-room, and to the left the dining-room. Above the drawing-room is the room which Hardy used as his first study at Max Gate, and in this room *The Woodlanders* was written. Later he moved his study to the back of the house with a window facing west, where *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* took shape. In after years another study was built over a new kitchen, and here *The Dynasts* and all the later poems were written, with the remaining literary work of Hardy's life. The rather large window of this, the last of all his workrooms, faced east, and the full moon rising over the tops of the dark pines was a familiar sight.

When Max Gate was built Hardy intended to have a sundial affixed to the easternmost turret, as shown in an illustration drawn by himself for *Wessex Poems*. This design, constantly in his mind, never matured during his life, though at the time of his death the sundial was actually being made in Dorchester, from a model prepared by himself, more than forty years after it was first planned.

A description of his personal appearance at this time, by a careful observer, is as follows:

"A somewhat fair-complexioned man, a trifle below the middle-height [he was actually 5 ft. 6½ ins.] of slight build, with a pleasant thoughtful face, exceptionally broad at the temples, and fringed by a beard trimmed after the Elizabethan manner [this beard was shaved off about 1890, and he never grew another, but had always a moustache]; a man readily sociable and genial, but one whose mien conveys the impression that the world in his eyes has rather more of the tragedy than the comedy about it."

His smile was of exceptional sweetness, and his eyes were a clear blue-grey. His whole aspect was almost

childlike in its sincerity and simplicity, the features being strongly marked, and his nose, as he himself once described it, more Roman than aquiline. The nobility of his brow was striking. When young he had abundant hair of a deep chestnut colour, which later became a dark brown, almost black, until it turned grey. His hands were well shaped, with long deft fingers; his shoulders particularly neat, and his gait light and easy. He walked very rapidly. He was always a spare man, though not actually thin, and he never in his life allowed himself to be weighed, as he said he considered that to be unlucky.

CHAPTER XIV

MAX GATE AND "THE WOODLANDERS"

1885-1887: *Act.* 45-46

ON June 29 the Hardys slept at Max Gate for the first time—the house being one they were destined to occupy permanently thence onward, except during the four or five months in each year that were spent in London or abroad. Almost the first visitor at their new house was R. L. Stevenson, till then a stranger to Hardy, who wrote from Bournemouth to announce his coming, adding characteristically: "I could have got an introduction, but my acquaintance with your mind is already of old date. . . . If you should be busy or unwilling, the irregularity of my approach leaves you the safer retreat." He appeared two days afterwards, with his wife, wife's son, and cousin. They were on their way to Dartmoor, the air of which Stevenson had learnt would be good for his complaint. But, alas, he never reached Dartmoor, falling ill at Exeter and being detained there till he was well enough to go home again.

"*September* 16. Dined with [Hon. Aubrey] Spring-Rice [who lived at Dorchester]. Met there his cousin Aubrey de Vere the poet, and Father Poole. De Vere says that his father used to say a Greek drama was the fifth act of an Elizabethan one, which of course it is, when not a sixth."

"*October* 17. Called on William Barnes. Talked of old families. He told me a story of Louis Napoleon.

During his residence in England he was friendly with the Damers, and used to visit at Winterborne-Came House, near Dorchester, where they lived. (It was a current tradition that he wished to marry Miss Damer; also that he would dreamily remark that it was fated he should be the Emperor of the French to avenge the defeat of Waterloo.) It was the fashion then for the Dorchester people to parade in full dress in the South Walk on Sunday afternoons, and on one occasion the Damers with their guest came in from their house a mile off and joined in the promenade. Barnes, who kept a school in the town, had an usher from Blackmore Vale named Hann (whose people seem to have been of my mother's stock), and Barnes and his usher also promenaded. For a freak Louis Napoleon, who was walking with Colonel Damer, slipt his cane between Hann's legs when they brushed past each other in opposite directions, and nearly threw the usher down. Hann was peppery, like all of that pedigree, my maternal line included, and almost before Barnes knew what was happening had pulled off his coat, thrown it on Barnes, and was challenging Louis Napoleon to fight. The latter apologized profusely, said it was quite an accident, and laughed the affair off; so the burghers who had stood round expecting a fight resumed their walk disappointed."

"*November 17-19.* In a fit of depression, as if enveloped in a leaden cloud. Have gone back to my original plot for *The Woodlanders* after all. Am working from half-past ten A.M. to twelve P.M., to get my mind made up on the details."

"*November 21-22.* Sick headache."

"Tragedy. It may be put thus in brief: a tragedy exhibits a state of things in the life of an individual which unavoidably causes some natural aim or desire of his to end in a catastrophe when carried out."

"*November 25.* Letter from John Morley [probably

about *The Woodlanders*, he being then editor of *Macmillan's Magazine* in which it was to appear]; and one from Leslie Stephen, with remarks on books he had read between whiles."

"December 9. 'Everything looks so little—so ghastly little!' A local exclamation heard."

"December 12. Experience *unteaches*—(what one at first thinks to be the rule in events)."

"December 21. The Hypocrisy of things. Nature is an arch-dissembler. A child is deceived completely; the older members of society more or less according to their penetration; though even they seldom get to realize that *nothing* is as it appears."

"December 31. This evening, the end of the old year 1885 finds me sadder than many previous New Year's Eves have done. Whether building this house at Max Gate was a wise expenditure of energy is one doubt, which, if resolved in the negative, is depressing enough. And there are others. But:

"'This is the chief thing: Be not perturbed; for all things are according to the nature of the universal.'" [Marcus Aurelius.]

1886.—"January 2, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* begins to-day in the *Graphic* newspaper, and *Harper's Weekly*.—I fear it will not be so good as I meant, but after all, it is not improbabilities of incident but improbabilities of character that matter. . . .

"Cold weather brings out upon the faces of people the written marks of their habits, vices, passions, and memories, as warmth brings out on paper a writing in sympathetic ink. The drunkard looks still more a drunkard when the splotches have their margins made distinct by frost, the hectic blush becomes a stain now, the cadaverous complexion reveals the bone under, the quality of handsomeness is reduced to its lowest terms."

"January 3. My art is to intensify the expression of

things, as is done by Crivelli, Bellini, etc., so that the heart and inner meaning is made vividly visible."

"*January 6.* Misapprehension. The shrinking soul thinks its weak place is going to be laid bare, and shows its thought by a suddenly clipped manner. The other shrinking soul thinks the clipped manner of the first to be the result of its own weakness in some way, not of its strength, and shows its fear also by its constrained air! So they withdraw from each other and misunderstand."

"*March 4.* Novel-writing as an art cannot go backward. Having reached the analytic stage it must transcend it by going still further in the same direction. Why not by rendering as visible essences, spectres, etc. the abstract thoughts of the analytic school?"

This notion was approximately carried out, not in a novel, but through the much more appropriate medium of poetry, in the supernatural framework of *The Dynasts* as also in smaller poems. And a further note of the same date enlarges the same idea:

"The human race to be shown as one great network or tissue which quivers in every part when one point is shaken, like a spider's web if touched. Abstract realisms to be in the form of Spirits, Spectral figures, etc.

"The Realities to be the true realities of life, hitherto called abstractions. The old material realities to be placed behind the former, as shadowy accessories."

In the spring and summer they were again in London, staying in Bloomsbury to have the Reading Room of the Museum at hand. It was the spring during which Gladstone brought in his Home Rule Bill for Ireland. The first that Hardy says about it occurs in an entry dated *April 8, 9, 10, 11*:

"A critical time, politically. I never remember a debate of such absorbing interest as this on Gladstone's Bill for Irish Government. He spoke lucidly: Chamberlain with manly practical earnestness; Hartington fairly

forcibly ; Morley without much effect (for him). Morley's speech shows that in Parliament a fine intelligence is not appreciated without sword-and-buckler doggedness. Chamberlain impresses me most of all, as combining these qualities."

And on *May 10*: "Saw Gladstone enter the Houses of Parliament. The crowd was very excited, not only waving their hats and shouting and running, but leaping in the air. His head was bare, and his now bald crown showed pale and distinct over the top of Mrs. Gladstone's bonnet."

On the 13th Hardy was in the House, the debate on the Government of Ireland still continuing :

"Gladstone was suave in replying to Bradlaugh, almost unctuous. 'Not accustomed to recognize Parliamentary debts after five years', etc. He would shake his head and smile contradictions to his opponents across the table and red box, on which he wrote from time to time. Heard Morley say a few words, also Sir W. Harcourt, and Lord Hartington ; a speech from Sir H. James, also from Lord G. Hamilton, Campbell-Bannerman, etc. Saw the dandy party enter in evening-dress, eye-glasses, diamond rings, etc. They were a great contrast to Joseph Arch and the Irish members in their plain, simple, ill-fitting clothes. The House is a motley assembly nowadays. Gladstone's frock-coat dangled and swung as he went in and out with a white flower in his button-hole and open waistcoat. Lord Randolph's manner in turning to Dillon, the Irish member, was almost arrogant. Sir R. Cross was sturdy, like T. B. the Dorchester butcher, when he used to stand at the chopping-block on market-days. The earnestness of the Irish members who spoke was very impressive ; Lord G. Hamilton was entirely wanting in earnestness ; Sir H. James quite the reverse ; E. Clarke direct, firm, and incisive, but inhumane.

"To realize the difficulty of the Irish question it is necessary to *see* the Irish phalanx sitting tight : it then

seems as if one must go with Morley, and get rid of them at any cost.

"Morley kept trying to look used to it all, and not as if he were a consummate man of letters there by mistake. Gladstone was quite distinct from all others in the House, though he sits low in his seat from age. When he smiled one could see benevolence on his face. Large-heartedness *versus* small-heartedness is a distinct attitude which the House of Commons takes up to an observer's eye."

Though he did not enter it here Hardy often wrote elsewhere, and said of Home Rule that it was a staring dilemma, of which good policy and good philanthropy were the huge horns. Policy for England required that it should not be granted; humanity to Ireland that it should. Neither Liberals nor Conservatives would honestly own up to this opposition between two moralities, but speciously insisted that humanity and policy were both on one side—of course their own.

"*May*. Reading in the British Museum. Have been thinking over the dictum of Hegel—that the real is the rational and the rational the real—that real pain is compatible with a formal pleasure—that the idea is all, etc. but it doesn't help much. These venerable philosophers seem to start wrong; they cannot get away from a prepossession that the world must somehow have been made to be a comfortable place for man. If I remember, it was Comte who said that metaphysics was a mere sorry attempt to reconcile theology and physics."

"*May 17*. At a curious soirée in Bond Street. Met a Hindu Buddhist, a remarkably well-educated man who speaks English fluently. He is the coach of the Theosophical Society. Also encountered a Mr. E. Maitland, author of a book called *The Pilgrim and the Shrine*, which I remember. He mentioned also another, written, I think he said, by himself and Dr. Anna Kingsford in collaboration. If he could not get on with the work on any particu-

lar night he would go to her next morning and she would supply him with the sentences, written down by her on waking, as sentences she had dreamt of without knowing why. Met also Dr. Anna Kingsford herself, and others; all very strange people."

The Mayor of Casterbridge was issued complete about the end of May. It was a story which Hardy fancied he had damaged more recklessly as an artistic whole, in the interest of the newspaper in which it appeared serially, than perhaps any other of his novels, his aiming to get an incident into almost every week's part causing him in his own judgment to add events to the narrative somewhat too freely. However, as at this time he called his novel-writing "mere journeywork" he cared little about it as art, though it must be said in favour of the plot, as he admitted later, that it was quite coherent and organic, in spite of its complication. And others thought better of it than he did himself, as is shown by the letter R. L. Stevenson writes thereon :

"SKERRYVORE,
"BOURNEMOUTH,
[1886]

"MY DEAR HARDY,

"I have read 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' with sincere admiration : Henchard is a great fellow, and Dorchester is touched in with the hand of a master.

"Do you think you would let me try to dramatize it? I keep unusually well, and am

"Yours very sincerely,

"ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON."

What became of this dramatic project there is no evidence to show in the *Life of Stevenson*, so far as is remembered by the present writer. The story in long after years became highly popular; but it is curious to find that Hardy had some difficulty in getting it issued in volume-form, James Payn, the publishers' reader, having

reported to Smith, Elder & Co. that the lack of gentry among the characters made it uninteresting—a typical estimate of what was, or was supposed to be, mid-Victorian taste.

During the remainder of this month, and through June and July, they were dining and lunching out almost every day. Hardy did not take much account of these functions, though some remarks he makes are interesting. For instance, he describes the charming daughter of a then popular hostess with whom he and his wife had been lunching:

“M—— W—— is still as childlike as when I first met her. She has an instinct to *give* something which she cannot resist. Gave me a flower. She expresses as usual contrary opinions at different moments. At one time she is going to marry; then she never is: at one moment she has been ill; at another she is always well. Pities the row of poor husbands at Marshall and Snelgrove’s. Gave a poor crossing-sweeper a shilling; came back and found her drunk. An emotional delicate girl, in spite of what she calls her ‘largeness’, *i.e.*, her being bigly built.”

In these weeks Hardy met Walter Pater, “whose manner is that of one carrying weighty ideas without spilling them”. Also a lot of politicians, on whom he notes: “Plenty of form in their handling of politics, but no matter, or originality.” Either on this occasion or a few days later the hostess, Mrs. Jeune, drew the attention of Justin McCarthy—also a guest—to the Conservative placard in her window. “I hope you don’t mind the blue bill?” “Not at all,” said the amiable McCarthy blandly. “Blue is a colour I have liked from a boy.”

At Mr. and Mrs. Gosse’s they met Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes and his daughter:

“His is a little figure, that of an aged boy. He said markedly that he did not read novels; I did not say I had

never read his essays, though it would have been true, I am ashamed to think. . . . But authors are not so touchy as they are supposed to be on such matters—at least I am not—and I found him a very bright, pleasant, juvenile old man.” At a Rabelais Club dinner a few days later he renewed acquaintance with Dr. Holmes, and with Henry James, “who has a ponderously warm manner of saying nothing in infinite sentences”; and also talked to George Meredith. This may possibly have been the first time he and Meredith had met since Hardy received Meredith’s advice about novel-writing; but it is not clear that it was so. At dinners elsewhere in these weeks he met Whistler and Charles Keene, Bret Harte, Sambourne, and others—most of them for the first and last time; at Sidney Colvin’s he renewed acquaintance with R. L. Stevenson, then in London; and at another house sat next to a genial old lady, Lady Camperdown, and “could not get rid of the feeling that I was close to a great naval engagement”.

On some music of Wagner’s listened to at a concert at this time when it was less familiar to the public than after, Hardy remarks: “It was *weather* and *ghost* music—whistling of wind and storm, the strumming of a gale on iron railings, the creaking of doors; low screams of entreaty and agony through key-holes, amid which trumpet-voices are heard. Such music, like any other, may be made to express emotion of various kinds; but it cannot express the subject or reason of that emotion.”

Apropos of this it may be mentioned here that, many years after, Hardy met Grieg, and in doing his best to talk about music Hardy explained that Wagner’s compositions seemed to him like the wind-effects above described. “I would rather have the wind and rain myself,” Grieg replied, shaking his head.

Mrs. Procter, who was still strong enough to go out, came to the Hardys to tea, and among her stores of anecdotes told one that was amusing about Macaulay and

Sydney Smith, who had dined at her house in years gone by: when Macaulay had gone she said to Sydney Smith: "You gave him no chance at all to talk." "On the contrary," said Sydney Smith, "I gave him several opportunities—which you took advantage of."

It was during this summer that the Hardys either began or renewed their acquaintance with Mrs. Henry Reeve and her sister Miss Gollop, whose family was an old Dorset one; and with Reeve himself, the well-known editor of the *Edinburgh Review* and of the famous *Greville Memoirs*. Notwithstanding a slight pompousness of manner he attracted the younger man by his wide experience of Continental men of letters, musicians, and princes, and of English affairs political and journalistic.

"June 29. Called on Leslie Stephen. He is just the same or worse; as if dying to express sympathy, but suffering under some terrible curse which prevents his saying any but caustic things, and showing antipathy instead." [Hardy was not aware that Stephen was unwell, and growing deaf, or he would not have put in this form his impression of a man he so much liked, and who had been so much to him.]

"Afterwards had a good talk with Auberon Herbert at Lady Portsmouth's. He said that the clue to Gladstone's faults was personal vanity. His niece Lady Winifred Herbert, who was present, said that politics had revealed themselves to her as a horror of late. Nevertheless she insisted that to listen to our conversation on the same horror was not an infliction."

Mr. George Gissing, finding that Hardy was in London this summer, had asked if he might call upon him for some advice about novel-writing; which he did. Sending one of his own novels afterwards, Gissing writes at the end of June:

"It is possible you will find *The Unclassed* detestable. I myself should not dare to read it now, it is too saturated

with bygone miseries of every kind. . . . May I add in one word what very real pleasure it has given me to meet and speak with you? I have not been the least careful of your readers, and in your books I have constantly found refreshment and onward help. That aid is much needed now-a-days by anyone who wishes to pursue literature as distinct from the profession of letters. In literature my interests begin and end; I hope to make my life and all its acquirements subservient to my ideal of artistic creation. The end of it all may prove ineffectual, but as well spend one's strength thus as in another way. The misery of it is that, writing for English people, one may not be thorough: reticences and superficialities have so often to fill places where one is willing to put in honest work."

"*July 11.* Met and talked to Browning at Mrs. Procter's again, and a day or two later at Mrs. Skirrow's, where was also Oscar Wilde, etc.

"In Rotten Row. Every now and then each woman, however interesting, puts on her *battle face*.

"In evening to bookstalls in Holywell Street known to me so many years ago."

Hardy by this time had quite resigned himself to novel-writing as a trade, which he had never wanted to carry on as such. He now went about the business mechanically. He was in court a part of the time during which the Crawford-Dilke case was proceeding. He makes no comment on the case itself, but a general remark on the court:

"The personality which fills the court is that of *the witness*. The judge's personality during the cross-examination contracts to his corporeal dimensions merely. So do they all save that of the pervasive witness aforesaid. . . . The witness is also the fool of the court. . . . The witness's little peculiarities supersede those of all the other personages together. He is at once king and victim.

"As to the architecture of the courts, there are everywhere religious art-forces masquerading as law symbols! The leaf, flower, fret, suggested by spiritual emotion, are pressed into the service of social strife."

The remainder of his spare time in London this year appears to have been spent in the British Museum Library and elsewhere, considering the question of *The Dynasts*.

At the end of July they returned to Max Gate, where he went on with *The Woodlanders*; and in October they paid another visit to Lady Portsmouth in Devon, where they had a pleasant week, visiting local scenes and surroundings down to the kennels (Lord Portsmouth being Master of Hounds) and the dogs' cemetery. "Lord Portsmouth made his whipper-in tell Emma the story of the hunted fox that ran up the old woman's clock-case, adding corroborative words with much gravity as the story proceeded and enjoying it more than she did, though he had heard it 100 times."

In October the Dorset poet William Barnes died. Hardy had known him ever since his schoolmastering time in South Street, Dorchester, next door to the architect under whom Hardy had served his years of pupillage. In 1864 Barnes had retired from school-keeping, and accepted the living of Winterborne-Came-cum-Whitcombe, the rectory house being, by chance, not half a mile from the only spot Hardy could find convenient for building a dwelling on. Hardy's walk across the fields to attend the poet's funeral was marked by the singular incident to which he alludes in the poem entitled "The Last Signal". He also wrote an obituary notice of his friend for the *Athenæum*, which was afterwards drawn upon for details of his life in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. It was not till many years after that he made and edited a selection of Barnes's poems.

The beginning of December covers this entry :

"I often view society-gatherings, people in the street, in a room, or elsewhere, as if they were beings in a somnambulistic state, making their motions automatically—not realizing what they mean."

And a few days later another, when going to London :

"*December 7.* Winter. The landscape has turned from a painting to an engraving : the birds that love worms fall back upon berries : the back parts of homesteads assume, in the general nakedness of the trees, a humiliating squalidness as to their details that has not been contemplated by their occupiers.

"A man I met in the train says in a tone of bitter regret that he wore out seven sets of horseshoes in riding from Sturminster Newton to Weymouth when courting a young woman at the latter place. He did not say whether he won and married her, or not ; but I fancy he did.

"At the Society of British Artists there is good technique in abundance ; but ideas for subjects are lacking. The impressionist school is strong. It is even more suggestive in the direction of literature than in that of art. As usual it is pushed to absurdity by some. But their principle is, as I understand it, that what you carry away with you from a scene is the true feature to grasp ; or in other words, *what appeals to your own individual eye and heart in particular* amid much that does not so appeal, and which you therefore omit to record.

"Talked to Bob Stevenson—Louis's cousin—at the Savile. A more solid character than Louis.

"Called on Mrs. Jeune. She was in a rich pinky-red gown, and looked handsome as we sat by the firelight *en tête-à-tête* : she was, curiously enough, an example of Whistler's study in red that I had seen in the morning at the Gallery.

"To Lady Carnarvon's 'small and early'. Snow falling : the cabman drove me furiously—I don't know why. The

familiar man with the lantern at the door. Her drawing-room was differently arranged from its method during her summer crushes. They seemed glad to see me. Lady Winifred told me she was going to be married on the 10th of January at the Savoy Chapel, with other details of the wedding. She was serious and thoughtful—I fancied a little careworn. Said she was not going to let her honeymoon interfere with her reading, and means to carry a parcel of books. Spoke of her betrothed as ‘He’—as a workman speaks of his employer—never mentioning his name. Wants me to call my heroine ‘Winifred’, but it is too late to alter it.

“Talked to Lady Carnarvon about the trees at Highclere in relation to my work in hand [*The Woodlanders*]. Lord C. told me he had filled several bookshelves with books all written by members of his own family—from Sir Philip Sidney, who was his mother’s mother’s mother’s, etc. brother, downwards.

“The last time, I suppose, that I shall see friendly Winifred Herbert pouring out tea from the big tea-pot in that house, as I have seen her do so many times. Lady Carnarvon went about the room weaving little webs of sympathy between her guests.”

So came the end of 1886.

January 1887 was uneventful at Max Gate, and the only remark its occupier makes during the month is the following:

“After looking at the landscape ascribed to Bonington in our drawing-room I feel that Nature is played out as a Beauty, but not as a Mystery. I don’t want to see landscapes, *i.e.*, scenic paintings of them, because I don’t want to see the original realities—as optical effects, that is. I want to see the deeper reality underlying the scenic, the expression of what are sometimes called abstract imaginings.

“The ‘simply natural’ is interesting no longer. The

much decried, mad, late-Turner rendering is now necessary to create my interest. The exact truth as to material fact ceases to be of importance in art—it is a student's style—the style of a period when the mind is serene and unawakened to the tragical mysteries of life; when it does not bring anything to the object that coalesces with and translates the qualities that are already there,—half hidden, it may be—and the two united are depicted as the All.”

“February 4, 8.20 P.M. Finished *The Woodlanders*. Thought I should feel glad, but I do not particularly,—though relieved.” In after years he often said that in some respects *The Woodlanders* was his best novel.

“February 6. Sunday. To see my father. It was three men whom he last saw flogged in Dorchester by the Town-pump—about 1830. He happened to go in from Stinsford about mid-day. Some soldiers coming down the street from the Barracks interfered, and swore at Davis [Jack Ketch] because he did not ‘flog fair’; that is to say he waited between each lash for the flesh to recover sensation, whereas, as they knew from experience, by striking quickly the flesh remained numb through several strokes.”

“February 13. You may regard a throng of people as containing a certain small minority who have sensitive souls; these, and the aspects of these, being what is worth observing. So you divide them into the mentally unquickened, mechanical, soulless; and the living, throbbing, suffering, vital. In other words, into souls and machines, ether and clay.

“I was thinking a night or two ago that people are somnambulists—that the material is not the real—only the visible, the real being invisible optically. That it is because we are in a somnambulistic hallucination that we think the real to be what we see as real.

“Faces. The features to beholders so commonplace are to their possessor lineaments of high estimation, striking, hopeful.”

Having now some leisure, and the spring drawing near, Hardy carried into effect an idea that he had long entertained, and on Monday, March 14, 1887, left Dorchester with Mrs. Hardy for London on their way to Italy, the day before *The Woodlanders* was published by the Messrs. Macmillan.

CHAPTER XV

ITALIAN JOURNEY

1887: *Act.* 46

THE month had been mild hitherto, but no sooner had they started than the weather turned to snow ; and a snow-storm persistently accompanied them across the Channel and southward beyond. They broke the journey at Aix-les-Bains, at which place they arrived past midnight, and the snow being by this time deep a path was cleared with spades for them to the fly in waiting, which two horses, aided by men turning the wheels, dragged with difficulty up the hill to the Hôtel Château Durieux—an old-fashioned place with stone floors and wide fireplaces. They were the only people there—the first visitors of the season—and in spite of a huge fire in their bedroom they found the next morning a cone of snow within each casement, and a snow film on the floor sufficient to show their tracks in moving about. Hardy used to speak of a curious atmospheric effect then witnessed : he was surprised that the windows of the room they occupied—one of the best—should command the view of a commonplace paddock only, with a few broken rails and sheds. But presently “what had seemed like the sky evolved a scene which uncurtained itself high up in the midst of the aerial expanse, as in a magic lantern, and vast mountains appeared there, tantalizingly withdrawing again as if they had been a mere illusion”.

They stayed here a day or two, “the mountains

showing again coquettish signs of uncovering themselves, and again coquettishly pulling down their veil”.

Leaving for Turin they stayed there awhile, then duly reached Genoa, concerning the first aspect of which from the train Hardy wrote a long time after the lines entitled “Genoa and the Mediterranean”, though that city—so pre-eminently the city of marble—“everything marble”, he writes, “even little doorways in slums”—nobly redeemed its character when they visited its palaces during their stay.

At Pisa after visiting the Cathedral and Baptistery they stood at the top of the leaning tower during a peal of the bells, which shook it under their feet, and saw the sun set from one of the bridges over the Arno, as Shelley had probably seen it from the same bridge many a time. Thence by “melancholy olives and cheerful lemons” they proceeded to Florence, where they were met by an inhabitant of that city, Lucy Baxter, the daughter of the poet Barnes, married and settled there since Hardy had known her in girlhood, and who wrote under the name of “Leader Scott”. She had obtained lodgings for them at the Villa Trollope, in the Piazza dell’ Indipendenza; and there they remained all the time they were in Florence. Their Florentine experiences onward were much like those of other people visiting for the first time the buildings, pictures, and historic sites of that city. They were fortunately able to see the old Market just before its destruction. Having gone through the galleries and churches of Florence, they drove out and visited another English resident in the country near, and also went over the Certosa di Val d’Ema. Then they travelled on to Rome, their first glimpse of it being of the Dome of St. Peter’s across the stagnant flats of the Campagna.

They put up at the Hôtel d’Allemagne, in the Via Condotti, a street opposite the Piazza di Spagna and the steps descending from the church of SS. Trinità dei Monti, on the south side of which stands the house where Keats

died. Hardy liked to watch of an evening, when the streets below were immersed in shade, the figures ascending and descending these steps in the sunset glow, the front of the church orange in the same light ; and also the house hard by, in which no mind could conjecture what had been lost to English literature in the early part of the same century that saw him there.

After some days spent in the Holy City Hardy began to feel, he frequently said, its measureless layers of history to lie upon him like a physical weight. The time of their visit was not so long after the peeling of the Colosseum and other ruins of their vast accumulations of parasitic growths, which, though Hardy as an architect defended the much deplored process on the score of its absolute necessity if the walls were to be preserved, he yet wished had not been taken in hand till after his inspection of them. This made the ruins of the ancient city, the "*altae moenia Romae*" as he called them from the *Aeneid*, more gaunt to the vision and more depressing to the mind than they had been to visitors when covered with greenery, and accounts for his allusions to the city in the poems on Rome written after his return, as exhibiting "ochreous gauntness", "umbered walls", and so forth.

He mentions in a note the dustiness of the Pincio : "Dust rising in clouds from the windy drive to the top, whitening the leaves of the evergreen oaks, and making the pale splotches on the trunks of the plane trees yet paler. The busts of illustrious Romans seem to require hats and goggles as a protection. But in the sheltered gardens beneath palms spread, and oranges still hang on the trees."

There was a great spurt of building going on at this time, on which he remarks, "I wonder how anybody can have any zest to erect a new building in Rome, in the overpowering presence of decay on the mangy and rotting walls of old erections, originally of fifty times the strength

of the new." This sentiment was embodied in the sonnet called "Building a New Street in the Ancient Quarter."

A visit to the graves of Shelley and Keats was also the inspiration of more verses—probably not written till later; his nearly falling asleep in the Sala delle Muse of the Vatican was the source of another poem, the weariness being the effect of the deadly fatiguing size of St. Peter's; and the musical incident which, as he once said, took him by surprise when investigating the remains of Caligula's palace, that of another.

"The quality of the faces in the streets of Rome: Satyrs: Emperors: Faustinas."

Hardy's notes of Rome were of a very jumbled and confusing kind. But, probably from a surviving architectural instinct, he made a few measurements in the Via Appia Antica, where he was obsessed by a vision of a chained file of prisoners plodding wearily along towards Rome, one of the most haggard of whom was to be famous through the ages as the founder of Pauline Christianity. He also noticed that the pavement of the fashionable promenade, the Corso, was two feet six inches wide. Of a different kind was his note that

"The monk who showed us the hole in which stood Saint Peter's Cross in the Church of S. Pietro in Montorio, and fetched up a pinch of clean sand from it, implying it had been there ever since the apostle's crucifixion, was a man of cynical humour, and gave me an indescribably funny glance from the tail of his eye as if to say: 'You see well enough what an imposture it all is!' I have noticed this sly humour in some more of these Roman monks, such as the one who sent me on alone into the vaults of the Cappuccini [among the thousands of skulls there], not knowing that I was aware of them, and therefore not startled at the ghastly scene. Perhaps there is something in my appearance which makes them think me a humorist also."

On the Roman pictures and statuary the only remark he makes except in verse is : "Paintings. In Roman art the kernel of truth has acquired a thick rind of affectation : e.g. I find that pictures by Giotto have been touched up so thoroughly that what you see is not Giotto at all, but the over-lying renovations. A disappointing sight. Alas for this 'wronged great soul of an ancient master' !" (The remark, though written at Rome, seems to refer more particularly to Florence.)

By curious chance Hardy was present at a wedding at the church of S. Lorenzo-in-Lucina, and was vexed with himself that he did not recollect till afterwards that it was the church of Pompilia's marriage in *The Ring and the Book*. But he was on the whole more interested in Pagan than in Christian Rome, of the latter preferring churches in which he could detect columns from ancient temples. Christian Rome, he said, was so rambling and stratified that to comprehend it in a single visit was like trying to read Gibbon through at a sitting. So that, for instance, standing on the meagre remains of the Via Sacra then recently uncovered, he seemed to catch more echoes of the inquisitive bore's conversation there with the poet Horace than of worship from the huge basilicas hard by, which were in point of time many centuries nearer to him. But he was careful to remind one to whom he spoke about this that it was really a question of familiarity, time being nothing beside knowledge, and that he happened to remember the scene in the Satires which he, like so many schoolboys, had read, while his mind was a blank on the most august ceremonial of the Middle-Age Christian services in the Basilica Julia or the Basilica of Constantine.

"*April*. Our spirits. As we get older they are less subject to steep gradients than in youth. We lower the elevations, and fill the hollows with sustained judgments."

While here he received among other letters one from Mrs. Procter containing the following remarks :

"It is very kind of you to think of me in Rome, and stretch out a friendly hand. Perhaps, as you are living amidst the Ancient, there is a propriety in thinking of the Oldish, and, I must say, the truest, friend you have.—

"We are still in Winter: to-day a bitter East wind, and tiles and chimney pots flying about. Never have we had so long a season of cold weather—all our Money gone in Coals and Gas.

"I have been displeased, so much as one ever is by a Man whom you care nothing about, by an Article written by a Dr. Wendell Holmes the American. He comes here, and then says, 'the most wonderful thing I saw in England were the Old Ladies—they are so active, and tough like Old Macaws'—Now am I like an Old Macaw?—He might have said Parrots.

"Then Mr. Thackeray's letters [to Mrs. Brookfield]: so common, so vulgar! You will see them in Scribner's Magazine.—He was never in love with me, but the 200 letters he wrote me were very superior to these."

It was with a sense of having grasped very little of its history that he left the city, though with some relief, which may have been partly physical and partly mental.

Returning to Florence on "a soft green misty evening following rain", he found the scenery soothing after the gauntness of Rome. On a day of warm sun he sat down for a long time, he said, on the steps of the Lanzi, in the Piazza della Signoria, and thought of many things:

"It is three in the afternoon, and the faces of the buildings are steeped in afternoon stagnation. The figure of Neptune is looking an intense white against the brown-grey houses behind, and the bronze forms round the basin [of the fountain] are starred with rays on their noses, elbows, knees, bosoms and shoulders. The shade from the Loggia dei Lanzi falls half across the Piazza. Turning my head there rise the three great arches with their sculptures, then those in the middle of the Loggia, then the row of

six at the back with their uplifted fingers, as if——” [sentence unfinished].

“In the caffè near there is a patter of speech, and on the pavement outside a noise of hoofs. The reflection from that statue of Neptune throws a secondary light into the caffè.

“Everybody is thinking, even amid these art examples from various ages, that this present age is the ultimate climax and upshot of the previous ages, and not a link in a chain of them.

“In a work of art it is the accident which *charms*, not the intention; *that* we only like and admire. Instance the amber tones that pervade the folds of drapery in ancient marbles, the deadened polish of the surfaces, and the cracks and the scratches.”

In visiting Fiesole they met with a mishap which might have ended in a serious accident. With Mrs. Baxter they had journeyed out from Florence to the foot of the hill on which the little town stands, and were about to walk up the height when on second thoughts they entered a gimcrack omnibus that plied to the top. The driver went to have a drink before starting, and left the omnibus untended, only one of the two horses being put to. The horse immediately started with the three inside at a furious pace towards Florence. The highway was dotted with heaps of large stones for repair, but he avoided them by a miracle, until the steam tram from Florence appeared a little way ahead, and a collision seemed inevitable. Two workmen, however, seeing the danger, descended from the roof of a house and stepping in front of the horse stopped it. They again attempted Fiesole, and climbed up—this time on foot despite all invitations from flymen.

In a sonnet on Fiesole called “In the Old Theatre” Hardy makes use of an incident that occurred while he was sitting in the stone Amphitheatre on the summit of the hill.

A few more looks at Florence, including the Easter

ceremony of the Scoppio del Carro, a visit to Mrs. Browning's tomb, and to the supposed scene in the Piazza dell' Annunziata of one of Browning's finest poems, "The Statue and the Bust", ended their visit to this half-English city, and after seeing Siena they left for Bologna, Ferrara, and Venice by the railway across the Apennines, not forgetting to gaze at the Euganean Hills so inseparable from thoughts of Shelley. It is rather noticeable that two such differing poets as Browning and Shelley, in their writings, their mentality, and their lives, should have so mingled in Hardy's thoughts during this Italian tour, almost to the exclusion of other English poets equally, or nearly so, associated with Italy, with whose works he was just as well acquainted.

Hardy seems to have found more pleasure in Venice than in any Italian city previously visited, in spite of bad weather during a part of his stay there. Byron of course was introduced here among the other phantom poets marshalled through his brain in front of the sea-queen's historic succession of scenes.

A wet windy morning accompanied their first curious examination of the Ducal Palace, "the shining *ferri* of the gondolas curtesying down and up against the wharf wall, and the gondoliers standing looking on at us. The wet draught sweeps through the colonnade by Münster's shop, not a soul being within it but Münster, whose face brightens at sight of us like that of a man on a desert island. . . . The dumb boy who showed us the way to the Rialto has haunted us silently ever since.

"The Hall of the Great Council is saturated with Doge-domry. The faces of the Doges pictured on the frieze float out into the air of the room in front of me. 'We know nothing of you', say these spectres. 'Who may you be, pray?' The draught brushing past seems like inquiring touches by their cold hands, feeling, feeling like blind people what you are. Yes: here to this visionary place I

solidly bring in my person Dorchester and Wessex life; and they may well ask why do I do it. . . . Yet there is a connection. The bell of the Campanile of S. Marco strikes the hour, and its sound has exactly that tin-tray *timbre* given out by the bells of Longpuddle and Weatherbury, showing that they are of precisely the same-proportioned alloy."

Hardy had been, for many reasons, keen to see St. Mark's; and he formed his own opinion on it:

"Well. There is surely some conventional ecstasy, exaggeration,—shall I say humbug?—in what Ruskin writes about this, if I remember, (though I have not read him lately), when the church is looked at *as a whole*. One architectural defect nothing can get over—its squatness as seen from the natural point of view—the glassy marble pavement of the Grand Piazza. Second, its weak, flexuous, constructional lines. Then, the fantastic Oriental character of its details makes it barbaric in its general impression, in spite of their great beauty.

"Mosaics, mosaics, mosaics, gilding, gilding, everywhere inside and out. The domes like inverted china-bowls within—much gilt also.

"This being said, see what good things are left to say—of its art, of its history! That floor, of every colour and rich device, is worn into undulations by the infinite multitudes of feet that have trodden it, and *what* feet there have been among the rest!

"A commonplace man stoops in a dark corner where he strikes a common match, and shows us—what—a lost article?—a purse, pipe, or tobacco-pouch? no; shows us—drags from the depths of time as by a miracle—wonderful diaphanous alabaster pillars that were once in Solomon's temple."

On Venice generally he makes the following desultory remarks: "When it rains in Italy it makes one shrink and shiver; it is so far more serious a matter than in England.

We have our stern grey stone and brick walls, and weathered copings, and buttress-slopes, to fend such. But here there are exposed to the decaying rain marbles, and frescoes, and tesserae, and gildings, and endless things—driving one to implore mentally that all these treasures may be put under a glass case!"

When the weather was finer:

"Venice is composed of blue and sunlight. Hence I incline, after all, to 'sun-girt' rather than 'sea-girt', which I once upheld." [In Shelley's poem, "Many a Green Isle needs must be."]

"Venice requires *heat* to complete the picture of her. Heat is an artistic part of the portrait of all southern towns."

They were most kindly received and entertained during their brief stay by friends to whom they had introductions. Browning's friend Mrs. Bronson showed them many things; and in respect of an evening party given for them by Mrs. Daniel Curtis at the Palazzo Barbarigo, it could not be said that "silent rows the songless gondolier", several boats lit by lanterns pausing in front of the open windows on the Grand Canal while their rowers and the singers they brought serenaded the guests within. But alas, it was true that "Tasso's echoes were no more", the music being that of the latest popular song of the date:

"Fu-ni-cu-li, fu-ni-cu-la,
Fu-ni-cu-li-cu-la!"

However, the scene was picturesque, Hardy used to say—the dark shapes of the gondoliers creeping near to them silently, like cats or other nocturnal animals, the gleam of a *ferro* here and there: then the lanterns suddenly lighting up over the heads of the singers, throwing diffused light on their faces and forms; a sky as of black velvet stretching above with its star points, as the notes flapped back from the dilapidated palaces behind

with a hollow and almost sepulchral echo, as if from a vault.

Quoting Byron brings to the mind a regret which Hardy sometimes expressed, that though he possibly encountered some old native man or woman of fourscore or over who could remember Byron's residence at the Spinelli and Mocenigo palaces, he never questioned any likely one among them on the point, though once in especial he stood on the Riva degli Schiavoni beside such an aged personage whose appearance made him feel her to be an instance of such recollection.

He was curious to know if any descendants of the powerful Doges were left in decayed modern Venice. Mr. Curtis told him that there were some in Venetian society still—poor, but proud, though not offensively so. The majority were extinct, their palaces being ruinous. Going on to Mrs. Bronson's immediately afterwards, the Contessa M—— called. She was a great beauty, having the well-defined hues and contours of foreigners in the south; and she turned out to be one of the very descendants Hardy had inquired about. When asked afterwards how she was dressed, he said in a green velvet jacket with fluffy tags, a grey hat and feathers, a white veil with seed pearls, and a light figured skirt of a yellowish colour. She had a charming manner, her mind flying from one subject to another; like a child's as she spoke her pretty attempts at English. "But I li—eek moch to do it!" . . . "Si, si!" . . . "Oh noh, noh!"

However, Hardy was not altogether listening, he afterwards recalled. This correct, modest, modern lady, the friend of his English and American acquaintance in Venice, and now his own, was to him primarily the symbol and relic of the bygone ancient families; and the chief effect, he said, of her good looks and pretty voice on him was to carry him at one spring back to those behind the centuries, who here took

their pleasure when the sea was warm in May,
Balls and masks begun at midnight, burning ever to midday,
When they made up fresh adventures for the morrow. . . .

It is not known whether the Italian Contessa in *A Group of Noble Dames* was suggested by her; but there are resemblances.

Then they left Venice. "The Riva degli Schiavoni is interested along its whole length in our departure, just as nautical people at ports always are, and as we left the station we could see the tops of the Alps floating in the sky above the fog." They had been unable to follow Ruskin's excellent advice to approach Venice by water, but they had seen it from the water a good deal while there.

"The Cathedral, Milan. Yes, perhaps it is architectural filigree: and yet I admire it. The vaulting of the interior is infinite quadrilles in carved-work. A momentary vexation comes when I am reminded that it is not real—even a disgust. And yet I admire. The sense of space alone demands admiration, being beyond that expressed anywhere except at St. Peter's."

The cheerful scenes of life and gaiety here after the poetical decay of Venice came as the greatest possible contrast, and a not unwelcome change. Here Hardy's mind reverted to Napoleon, particularly when he was sitting in the sun with his wife on the roof of the Cathedral, and regarding the city in vistas between the flying buttresses. It was while here on the roof, he thought in after years, though he was not quite sure, that he conceived the Milan Cathedral scene in *The Dynasts*.

Hardy had lately been obsessed by an old French tune of his father's, "The Bridge of Lodi", owing to his having drawn near the spot of that famous Napoleonic struggle; and at a large music-shop in the Gallery of Victor Emmanuel he inquired about it; as may be expected, his whimsical questioning met with no success. He felt it

could meet with none, and yet went on with his search. At dinner at the Grand Hôtel de Milan that evening, where the Hardys had put up, they became friendly with a young Scotch officer of Foot returning from India, and Hardy told him about Lodi, and how he could not get the old tune.

"The Bridge of Lodi?" said the Scotchman (apparently a sort of Farfrae). "Ay, but I've never heard of it!"

"But you've heard of the battle, anyhow?" says the astonished Hardy.

"Nay, and I never have whatever!" says the young soldier.

Hardy then proceeded to describe the conflict, and by degrees his companion rose to an enthusiasm for Lodi as great as Hardy's own. When the latter said he would like to go and see the spot, his friend cried "And I'll go too!"

The next morning they started and passing through levels of fat meads and blooming fruit-trees, reached the little town of their quest, and more especially the historic bridge itself—much changed, but at any rate sufficiently well denoting the scene of Napoleon's exploit in the earlier and better days of his career. Over the quiet flowing of the Adda the two re-enacted the fight, and the "Little Corporal's" dramatic victory over the Austrians.

The pleasant jingle in *Poems of the Past and the Present* named after the bridge, and written some time after the excursion to the scene, fully enough describes the visit, but the young Scotch lieutenant from India is not mentioned, though his zest by this time had grown more than equal to Hardy's—the latter's becoming somewhat damped at finding that the most persevering inquiries at Lodi failed to elicit any tradition of the event, and the furthest search to furnish any photograph of the town and river.

They returned to England by way of Como and the St. Gothard, one of the remarks Hardy makes on the former

place being on the vying of "the young greens with the old greens, the greens of yesterday and the greens of yesterday". It was too early in the year for Lucerne, and they stayed there only a day. Passing through Paris, they went to see the Crown jewels that chanced just then to be on exhibition, previous to their sale.

PART IV
BETWEEN TOWN AND COUNTRY

CHAPTER XVI

LONDON FRIENDS, PARIS, AND SHORT STORIES

1887-1888: *Act.* 47-48

REACHING London in April 1887, Hardy attended the annual dinner of the Royal Academy. His remarks thereon:

"The watching presence of so many portraits gives a distinct character to this dinner. . . . In speaking, the Duke of Cambridge could not decide whether he had ended his speech or not, and so tagged and tagged on a bit more, and a bit more, till the sentences were like acrobats hanging down from a trapeze. Lord Salisbury's satire was rather too serious for after-dinner. Huxley began well but ended disastrously; the Archbishop was dreary; Morley tried to look a regular dining-out man-of-the-world, but really looked what he is by nature, the student. Everybody afterwards walked about, the Prince of Wales included, remaining till 12. I spoke to a good many; was apparently unknown to a good many more I knew. At these times men do not want to talk to their equals, but to their superiors."

On the Sunday after, the Hardys again met Browning at Mrs. Procter's, and being full of Italy, Hardy alluded to "The Statue and the Bust" (which he often thought one of the finest of Browning's poems); and observed that, looking at "the empty shrine" opposite the figure of Ferdinand in the Piazza dell' Annunziata, he had wondered where the bust had gone to, and had been informed by an officious waiter standing at a neighbouring door that he

remembered seeing it in its place; after which he gave further interesting details about it, for which information he was gratefully rewarded. Browning smiled and said, "I invented it."

Shortly afterwards they settled till the end of July at a house in Campden-Hill Road.

Speaking of this date Hardy said that in looking for rooms to stay at for the season he called at a house-agent's as usual, where, not seeing the man at the desk who had been there a day or two before, and who knew his wants in flats and apartments, he inquired for the man and was told he was out. Saying he would call again in an hour, Hardy left. On coming back he was told he was still out. He called a day or two afterwards, and the answer then was that the clerk he wanted was away.

"But you said yesterday he was only out," exclaimed Hardy. His informant looked round him as if not wishing to be overheard, and replied :

"Well, *strictly* he is not *out*, but *in*."

"Why didn't you say so?"

"Because you can't speak to him. He's dead and buried."

"May 16. Met Lowell at Lady Carnarvon's."

"May 29. Instance of a *wrong* (*i.e.* selfish) philosophy in poetry :

"Thrice happy he who on the sunless side
Of a romantic mountain. . . .
Sits coolly calm ; while all the world without,
Unsatisfied and sick, tosses at noon.

THOMSON."

"June 2. The forty-seventh birthday of Thomas the Unworthy."

"June 8. Met at a dinner at the Savile Club : Goschen Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Lytton, A. J. Balfour, and others."

"*June 9.* At dinner at (Juliet) Lady Pollock's. Sir F. told Emma that he had danced in the same quadrille with a gentleman who had danced with Marie Antoinette.

"Sir Patrick Colquhoun said that Lord Strath—— (illegible) told him he was once dining with Rogers when Sir Philip Francis was present. The conversation turned on 'Junius'. Rogers said he would ask Sir Philip point-blank if he really were the man, so going to him he said 'Sir Philip, I want to ask you a question.' Sir P. 'At your peril, Sir!' Rogers retreated saying 'He's not only Junius, but Junius *Brutus!*'

"He also told us that Lord S—— once related to him how George III. met him on Richmond Hill, and said to him: 'Eton boy, what are you doing here?'——'Taking a walk, Sir.'——'What form are you in?'——'The sixth.'——'Then you have that which I couldn't give you.'—— (Characteristic.)"

"*Sunday.* To Mrs. Procter's. Browning there. He was sleepy. In telling a story would break off, forgetting what he was going to say."

On the 21st was Queen Victoria's Jubilee, and Hardy took his wife to see the procession from the Savile Club in Piccadilly. "The Queen was very jolly-looking. The general opinion is that there will certainly never be another jubilee in England; anyhow, probably never such a gathering of royal personages again."

"25. At a concert at Prince's Hall I saw Souls outside Bodies."

"26. We were at Mrs. Procter's when Browning came in as usual. He seemed galled at not having been invited to the Abbey (Jubilee) ceremony. He says that so far from receiving (as stated in the *Pall Mall*) an invitation even so late as twenty-four hours before, he received absolutely no invitation from the Lord Chamberlain (Lord Lathom) at all. The Dean offered him one of his own family tickets, but B. did not care to go on such terms, so went

off to Oxford to stay with Jowett. People who were present say there were crowds of Court-servants and other nobodies there. An eminent actor had 25 tickets sent him . . . Millais, Huxley, Arnold, Spencer, etc. had none. Altogether Literature, Art, and Science had been unmistakably snubbed, and they should turn republican forthwith." An interesting comment on the reign of Queen Victoria !

The remainder of the London season in the brilliant Jubilee-year was passed by the Hardys gaily enough. At some houses the scene was made very radiant by the presence of so many Indian princes in their jewelled robes. At a certain reception Hardy was rather struck by one of the Indian dignitaries (who seems to have been the Raja of Kapurthala) ; remarking of him :

"In his mass of jewels and white turban and tunic he stood and sat apart amid the babble and gaiety, evidently feeling himself *alone*, and having too much character to pretend to belong to and throw himself into a thoughtless world of chit-chat and pleasure which he understood nothing of."

"June 30. Talked to Matthew Arnold at the Royal Academy *Soirée*. Also to Lang, Du Maurier, Thornycrofts, Mrs. Jeune etc."

"With E. to lunch at Lady Stanley's (of Alderley). Met there Lord Halifax, Lady Airlie, Hon. Maude Stanley, her brother Monsignor Stanley, and others. An exciting family dispute supervened, in which they took no notice of us guests at all."

But Hardy does not comment much on these society-gatherings, his thoughts running upon other subjects, as is shown by the following memorandum made on the same day as the above. (It must always be borne in mind that these memoranda on people and things were made by him only as personal opinions for private consideration, which he meant to destroy, and not for publication ; an issue

which has come about by his having been asked when old if he would object to their being printed, as there was no harm in them, and his saying passively that he did not mind.)

"*July 14.* It is the on-going—*i.e.*, the 'becoming'—of the world that produces its sadness. If the world stood still at a felicitous moment there would be no sadness in it. The sun and the moon standing still on Ajalon was not a catastrophe for Israel, but a type of Paradise."

In August he was back again at Max Gate, and there remarks on the difference between children who grow up in solitary country places and those who grow up in towns—the former being imaginative, dreamy, and credulous of vague mysteries; giving as the reason that "The Unknown comes within so short a radius from themselves by comparison with the city-bred".

At the end of the month Mr. Edmund Gosse wrote to inform Hardy among other things that R. L. Stevenson was off to Colorado as a last chance, adding in the course of a humorous letter: "I hope your spirits have been pretty good this summer. I have been scarcely fit for human society, I have been so deep in the dumps. I wonder whether climate has anything to do with it? It is the proper thing nowadays to attribute to physical causes all the phenomena which people used to call spiritual. But I am not sure. One may be dyspeptic and yet perfectly cheerful, and one may be quite well and yet no fit company for a churchyard worm. For the last week I should not have ventured to say unto a flea, 'Thou art my sister'."

"*September 3.* Mother tells me of a woman she knew named Nanny Priddle, who when she married would never be called by her husband's name 'because she was too proud', she said; and to the end of their lives the couple were spoken of as 'Nanny Priddle and John Cogan'."

"*September 25.* My grandmother used to say that

when sitting at home at Bockhampton she had heard the tranter 'beat out the tune' on the floor with his feet when dancing at a party in his own house, which was a hundred yards or more away from hers."

"October 2. Looked at the thorn-bushes by Rushy Pond [on an exposed spot of the heath]. In their wrath with the gales their forms resemble men's in like mood.

"A variant of the superstitions attached to pigeon's hearts is that, when the counteracting process is going on, the person who has bewitched the other *enters*. In the case of a woman in a village near here, who was working the spell at midnight, a neighbour knocked at the door and said: 'Do ye come in and see my little maid. She is so ill that I don't like to bide with her alone!'"

"October 7. During the funeral of Henry Smith, the rector's son at West Stafford, the cows looked mournfully over the churchyard wall from the adjoining barton at the grave, resting their clammy chins on the coping; and at the end clattered their horns in a farewell volley."

Another outline scheme for *The Dynasts* was shaped in November, in which Napoleon was represented as haunted by an Evil Genius or Familiar, whose existence he has to confess to his wives. This was abandoned, and another tried in which Napoleon by means of necromancy becomes possessed of an insight, enabling him to see the thoughts of opposing generals. This does not seem to have come to anything either.

But in December he quotes from Addison:

"In the description of Paradise the poet [Milton] has observed Aristotle's rule of lavishing all the ornaments of diction on the weak, inactive parts of the fable." And although Hardy did not slavishly adopt this rule in *The Dynasts*, it is apparent that he had it in mind in concentrating the "ornaments of diction" in particular places, thus following Coleridge in holding that a long poem should not attempt to be poetical all through.

"*December* 11. Those who invent vices indulge in them with more judgment and restraint than those who imitate vices invented by others."

"*December* 31. A silent New Year's Eve—no bell, or band, or voice.

"The year has been a fairly friendly one to me. It showed me the south of France—Italy, above all Rome—and it brought me back unharmed and much illuminated. It has given me some new acquaintances, too, and enabled me to hold my own in fiction, whatever that may be worth, by the completion of *The Woodlanders*.

"Books read or pieces looked at this year:

"Milton, Dante, Calderon, Goethe.

"Homer, Virgil, Molière, Scott.

"The Cid, Nibelungen, Crusoe, Don Quixote.

"Aristophanes, Theocritus, Boccaccio.

"Canterbury Tales, Shakespeare's Sonnets, Lycidas.

"Malory, Vicar of Wakefield, Ode to West Wind, Ode to Grecian Urn.

"Christabel, Wye above Tintern.

"Chapman's Iliad, Lord Derby's ditto, Worsley's Odyssey."

"*January* 2. 1888. Different purposes, different men. Those in the city for money-making are not the same men as they were when at home the previous evening. Nor are these the same as they were when lying awake in the small hours."

"*January* 5. Be rather curious than anxious about your own career; for whatever result may accrue to its intellectual and social value, it will make little difference to your personal well-being. A naturalist's interest in the hatching of a queer egg or germ is the utmost introspective consideration you should allow yourself."

"*January* 7. On New Year's Eve and day I sent off five copies of the magazine containing a story of mine, and three letters—all eight to friends by way of New Year's

greeting and good wishes. *Not a single reply.* Mem.: Never send New Year's letters etc., again."

[Two were dying: one ultimately replied. The story was either *The Withered Arm*, in *Blackwood*, or *The Waiting Supper* in *Murray's Magazine*, both of which appeared about this time.]

"Apprehension is a great element in imagination. It is a semi-madness, which sees enemies, etc., in inanimate objects.

"*January 14.* A 'sensation-novel' is possible in which the sensationalism is not casualty, but evolution; not physical but psychical. . . . The difference between the latter kind of novel and the novel of physical sensationalism—*i.e.*, personal adventure, etc.,—is this: that whereas in the physical the adventure itself is the subject of interest, the psychical results being passed over as commonplace, in the psychical the casualty or adventure is held to be of no intrinsic interest, but the effect upon the faculties is the important matter to be depicted."

"*January 24.* I find that my politics really are neither Tory nor Radical. I may be called an Intrinsicist. I am against privilege derived from accident of any kind, and am therefore equally opposed to aristocratic privilege and democratic privilege. (By the latter I mean the arrogant assumption that the only labour is hand-labour—a worse arrogance than that of the aristocrat,—the taxing of the worthy to help those masses of the population who will not help themselves when they might, etc.) Opportunity should be equal for all, but those who will not avail themselves of it should be cared for merely—not be a burden to, nor the rulers over, those who do avail themselves thereof."

"*February 5.* Heard a story of a farmer who was 'overlooked' [malignly affected] by *himself*. He used to go and examine his stock every morning before breakfast with anxious scrutiny. The animals pined away. He went to a conjurer or white witch, who told him he had no enemy;

that the evil was of his own causing, the eye of a fasting man being very blasting : that he should eat a 'dew-bit' before going to survey any possession about which he had hopes."

In the latter part of this month there arrived the following :

"The Rev. Dr. A. B. Grosart ventures to address Mr. Hardy on a problem that is of life and death ; personally, and in relation to young eager intellects for whom he is responsible. . . . Dr. Grosart finds abundant evidence that the facts and mysteries of nature and human nature have come urgently before Mr. Hardy's penetrative brain."

He enumerated some of the horrors of human and animal life, particularly parasitic, and added :

"The problem is how to reconcile these with the absolute goodness and non-limitation of God."

Hardy replied : "Mr. Hardy regrets that he is unable to suggest any hypothesis which would reconcile the existence of such evils as Dr. Grosart describes with the idea of omnipotent goodness. Perhaps Dr. Grosart might be helped to a provisional view of the universe by the recently published *Life of Darwin*, and the works of Herbert Spencer and other agnostics."

He met Leslie Stephen shortly after, and Stephen told him that he too had received a similar letter from Grosart ; to which he had replied that as the reverend doctor was a professor of theology, and he himself only a layman, he should have thought it was the doctor's business to explain the difficulty to his correspondent, and not his to explain it to the doctor.

Two or three days later the Bishop (Wordsworth) of Salisbury wrote to Hardy for his views on the migration of the peasantry, "which is of considerable social importance and has a very distinct bearing on the work of the Church", adding that Hardy with his very accurate knowledge of the custom was well-qualified to be the historian of its causes and its results. "Are they good or bad morally

and in respect of religion, respectability, etc., to men, women, and children." Hardy's answer cannot be discovered, but he is known to have held that these modern migrations are fatal to local traditions, and to cottage horticulture. Labourers formerly, knowing they were permanent residents, would plant apple-trees and fruit-bushes with zealous care, to profit from them : but now they scarce ever plant one, knowing they will be finding a home elsewhere in a year or two ; or if they do happen to plant any, digging them up and selling them before leaving ! Hence the lack of picturesqueness in modern labourers' dwellings.

"*March* 1. Youthful recollections of four village beauties :

"1. Elizabeth B——, and her red hair. [She seems to appear in the poem called 'Lizbie Browne', and was a gamekeeper's daughter, a year or two older than Hardy himself.]

"2. Emily D——, and her mere prettiness.

"3. Rachel H——, and her rich colour, and vanity, and frailty, and clever artificial dimple-making. [She is probably in some respects the original of Arabella in *Jude the Obscure*.]

"4. Alice P—— and her mass of flaxen curls."

"*March*. At the Temperance Hotel. The people who stay here appear to include religious enthusiasts of all sorts. They talk the old faiths with such new fervours and original aspects that such faiths seem again arresting. They open fresh views of Christianity by turning it in reverse positions, as Gérôme the painter did by painting the *shadow* of the Crucifixion instead of the Crucifixion itself as former painters had done.

"In the street outside I heard a man coaxing money from a prostitute in slang language, his arm round her waist. The outside was a commentary on the inside."

"*March* 9. British Museum Reading Room. Souls are gliding about here in a sort of dream—screened somewhat

by their bodies, but imaginable behind them. Dissolution is gnawing at them all, slightly hampered by renovations. In the great circle of the library Time is looking into Space. Coughs are floating in the same great vault, mixing with the rustle of book-leaves risen from the dead, and the touches of footsteps on the floor."

"*March 28.* On returning to London after an absence I find the people of my acquaintance abraded, their hair disappearing, also their flesh, by degrees.

"People who to one's-self are transient singularities are to themselves the permanent condition, the inevitable, the normal, the rest of mankind being to them the singularity. Think, that those (to us) strange transitory phenomena, *their* personalities, are with them always, at their going to bed, at their uprising!

"Footsteps, cabs, etc. are continually passing our lodgings. And every echo, pit-pat, and rumble that makes up the general noise has behind it a motive, a prepossession, a hope, a fear, a fixed thought forward; perhaps more—a joy, a sorrow, a love, a revenge.

"London appears not to *see itself*. Each individual is conscious of *himself*, but nobody conscious of themselves collectively, except perhaps some poor gaper who stares round with a half-idiotic aspect.

"There is no consciousness here of where anything comes from or goes to—only that it is present.

"In the City. The fiendish precision or mechanism of town-life is what makes it so intolerable to the sick and infirm. Like an acrobat performing on a succession of swinging trapezes, as long as you are at particular points at precise instants, everything glides as if afloat; but if you are not up to time——"

"*April 16.* News of Matthew Arnold's death, which occurred yesterday. . . . The *Times* speaks quite truly of his 'enthusiasm for the nobler and detestation of the meaner elements in humanity'."

"*April 19.* Scenes in ordinary life that are insipid at 20 become interesting at 30, and tragic at 40."

"*April 21.* Dr. Quain told me some curious medical stories when we were dining at Mrs. Jeune's. He said it was a mistake for anyone to have so many doctors as the German Emperor has, because neither feels responsible. Gave an account of Queen Adelaide, who died through her physicians' ignorance of her malady, one of them, Dr. Chambers, remarking, when asked why he did not investigate her disorder, 'Damn it, I wasn't going to pull about the Queen.'—she being such a prude that she would never have forgiven him for making an examination that, as it proved, would have saved her life.

"Mary Jeune says that when she tries to convey some sort of moral or religious teaching to the East-end poor, so as to change their views from wrong to right, it ends by their convincing her that their view is the right one—not by her convincing them."

"*April 23.* To Alma-Tadema's musical afternoon. Heckmann Quartett. The architecture of his house is incomplete without sunlight and warmth. Hence the dripping wintry afternoon without mocked his marble basin and brass steps and quilted blinds and silver apse."

"*April 26.* Thought in bed last night that Byron's *Childe Harold* will live in the history of English poetry not so much because of the beauty of parts of it, which is great, but because of its good fortune in being an accretion of descriptive poems by the most fascinating personality in the world—for the English—not a common plebeian, but a romantically wicked noble lord. It affects even Arnold's judgment."

"*April 28.* A short story of a young man—'who could not go to Oxford'—His struggles and ultimate failure. Suicide [Probably the germ of *Jude the Obscure*]. There is something [in this] the world ought to be shown, and I am the one to show it to them—though I was not alto-

gether hindered going, at least to Cambridge, and could have gone up easily at five-and-twenty.

"In Regent Street, which commemorates the Prince Regent. It is in the fitness of things that The Promenade of Prostitutes should be here. One can imagine *his shade* stalking up and down every night, smiling approvingly."

"May 13. Lord Houghton tells me to-day at lunch at Lady Catherine Gaskell's of a young lady who gave a full description of a ball to her neighbour during the Chapel Royal service by calling out at each response in the Litany as many details as she could get in. Also of Lord —— who saves all his old tooth-brushes affectionately.

"The Gaskells said that Lord and Lady Lymington and themselves went to the city in an omnibus, and one of them nearly sat on an Irishwoman's baby. G. apologized, when she exclaimed, 'Och, 'twas not you: 'twas the ugly one!' (pointing to Lord L.).

"Lady C. says that the central position of St. James's Square (where their house is) enables her to see so many more people. When she first comes to Town she feels a perfect lump the first fortnight—she knows nothing of the new phrases, and does not understand the social telegraphy and allusions."

May 28. They went to Paris *viâ* London and Calais: and stayed in the Rue du Commandant Rivière several weeks, noticing on their arrival as they always did "the sour smell of a foreign city".

June 4 and 7. At the Salon. "Was arrested by the sensational picture called 'The Death of Jezebel' by Gabriel Guays, a horrible tragedy, and justly so, telling its story in a flash."

"June 10. To Longchamps and the Grand Prix de Paris. Roar from the course as I got near. It was Pandemonium: not a blade of grass: half overshoe in dust: the ground covered with halves of white, yellow, and blue tickets: bookmakers with staring brass-lettered names and

addresses, in the very exuberance of honesty. The starter spoke to the jockeys entirely in English, and most of the cursing and swearing was done in English likewise, and done well. The horses passed in a volley, so close together that it seemed they must be striking each other. Excitement. Cries of 'Vive la France!' (a French horse having won)."

"*June 11.* To the Embassy. Bon Marché with Em. Walked to l'Etoile in twilight. The enormous arch stood up to its knees in lamplight, dark above against the deep blue of the upper sky. Went under and read some names of victories which were never won."

"*June 12.* To see the tombs of St. Denis with E. A lantern at the slit on one side of the vault shows the coffins to us at the opposite slit."

"*June 13.* Exhibition of Victor Hugo's manuscripts and drawings. Thence to one of the Correctional Courts: heard two or three trivial cases. Afterwards to the Salle des Conférences."

"*June 14.* Sunny morning. View from l'Etoile. Fresh, after rain; air clear. Could see distinctly far away along the Avenue de la Grande Armée—down into the hollow and on to rising ground beyond, where the road tapers to an obelisk standing there. Also could see far along the Avenue Wagram. In the afternoon I went to the Archives Nationales. Found them much more interesting than I had expected. As it was not a public day the attendant showed me round alone, which, with the gloomy wet afternoon, made the relics more solemn; so that, mentally, I seemed close to those keys from the Bastille, those letters of the Kings of France, those Edicts, and those corridors of white boxes, each containing one year's shady documents of a past monarchy."

Next day, coming out of the Bourse, he learnt of the death of the Emperor of Germany.

On returning to London Hardy had a rheumatic

attack which kept him in bed two or three days, after which they entered lodgings at Upper Phillimore Place, Kensington, where they remained till the third week in July. Walter Pater sometimes called on them from over the way, and told them a story of George III. anent the row of houses they were living in. These, as is well known, have their fronts ornamented with the stone festooning of their date, and the King would exclaim when returning from Weymouth: "Ah, there are the dish-clouts. Now I shall soon be home!" Acquaintance was renewed with various friends, among them, after a dozen years of silence, Mrs. Ritchie (Miss Thackeray), later Lady Ritchie. "Talked of the value of life, and its interest. She admits that her interest in the future lies largely in the fact that she has children, and says that when she calls on L. Stephen and his wife she feels like a ghost, who arouses sad feelings in the person visited."

As to the above remark on the value of life, Hardy writes whimsically a day or two later:

"I have attempted many modes [of finding it]. For my part, if there is any way of getting a melancholy satisfaction out of life it lies in dying, so to speak, before one is out of the flesh; by which I mean putting on the manners of ghosts, wandering in their haunts, and taking their views of surrounding things. To think of life as passing away is a sadness; to think of it as past is at least tolerable. Hence even when I enter into a room to pay a simple morning call I have unconsciously the habit of regarding the scene as if I were a spectre not solid enough to influence my environment; only fit to behold and say, as another spectre said: 'Peace be unto you!'"

"*July 3.* Called on [Eveline] Lady Portsmouth. Found her alone and stayed to tea. Looked more like a model countess than ever I have seen her do before, her black brocaded silk fitting her well and suiting her eminently. She is not one of those marble people who can be

depended upon for their appearance at a particular moment, but like all mobile characters uncertain as to aspect. She is one of the few, very few, women of her own rank for whom I would make a sacrifice: a woman too of talent, part of whose talent consists in concealing that she has any."

"*July 5.* A letter lies on the red velvet cover of the table; staring up, by reason of the contrast. I cover it over, that it may not hit my eyes so hard."

"*July 7.* One o'clock A.M. I got out of bed, attracted by the never-ending procession [of market-carts to Covent Garden] as seen from our bedroom windows, Phillimore Place. Chains rattle, and each cart cracks under its weighty pyramid of vegetables."

"*July 8.* A service at St. Mary Abbots, Kensington. The red plumes and ribbon in two stylish girls' hats in the foreground match the red robes of the persons round Christ on the Cross in the east window. The pale crucified figure rises up from a parterre of London bonnets and artificial hair-coils, as viewed from the back where I am. The sky over Jerusalem seems to have some connection with the corn-flowers in a fashionable hat that bobs about in front of the city of David. . . . When the congregation rises there is a rustling of silks like that of the Devils' wings in *Paradise Lost*. Every woman then, even if she had forgotten it before, has a single thought to the folds of her clothes. They pray in the litany as if under enchantment. Their real life is spinning on beneath this apparent one of calm, like the District Railway-trains underground just by—throbbing, rushing, hot, concerned with next week, last week. . . . Could these true scenes in which this congregation is living be brought into church bodily with the personages, there would be a churchful of jostling phantasmagorias crowded like a heap of soap bubbles, infinitely intersecting, but each seeing only his own. That bald-headed man is surrounded by the interior of the

Stock Exchange; that girl by the jeweller's shop in which she purchased yesterday. Through this bizarre world of thought circulates the recitative of the parson—a thin solitary note without cadence or change of intensity—and getting lost like a bee in the clerestory.”

“July 9. To ‘The Taming of the Shrew’. A spirited unconventional performance, revitalizing an old subject. The brutal mediaeval view of the sex which animates the comedy does not bore us by its obsolescence, the Shrew of Miss Ada Rehan being such a real shrew. Her attitude of sad, impotent resignation, when her husband wears out her endurance, in which she stands motionless and almost unconscious of what is going on around her, was well done. At first she hears the cracks of the whip with indifference; at length she begins to shrink at the sound of them, and when he literally whips the domestics out of the room she hides away. At first not looking at him in his tantrums, she gets to steal glances at him, with an awestruck arrested attention. The scene in which the sun-and-moon argument comes in contained the best of acting. Drew’s aspect of inner humorous opinion, lively eye, and made-up mind, is eminently suited to the husband’s character.

“Reading H. James’s *Reverberator*. After this kind of work one feels inclined to be purposely careless in detail. The great novels of the future will certainly not concern themselves with the minutiae of manners. . . . James’s subjects are those one could be interested in at moments when there is nothing larger to think of.”

“July 11. At the Savile. [Sir] Herbert Stephen declares that he met S——r [another member of the Club] in Piccadilly, a few minutes ago, going away from the direction of the club house door, and that S——r nodded to him; then arriving quickly at the Club he saw S——r seated in the back room. S——r, who is present during the telling, listens to this story of his wraith, and as H. S. repeats it to the other members, becomes quite uncomfort-

able at the weirdness of it. H. S. adds that he believes S——r is in the back room still, and S——r says he is afraid to go in to himself.”

“*July* 13. After being in the street : What was it on the faces of those horses ?—Resignation. Their eyes looked at me, haunted me. The absoluteness of their resignation was terrible. When afterwards I heard their tramp as I lay in bed, the ghosts of their eyes came in to me, saying, ‘Where is your justice, O man and ruler?’

“Lady Portsmouth told me at a dinner party last night that once she sat between Macaulay and Henry Layard in dining at Lord Lansdowne’s, and whenever one of them had got the ear of the table the other turned to her and talked, to show that the absolute vacuity of his rival’s discourse had to be filled in somehow with any rubbish at hand.

“*July* 14. Was much struck with Gladstone’s appearance at Flinders Petrie’s Egyptian Exhibition. The full curves of his Roman face ; and his cochin-china-egg complexion was not at all like his pallor when I last saw him, and there was an utter absence of any expression of senility or mental weakness.—We dined at Walter Pater’s. Met Miss ——, an Amazon, more, an Atalanta, most, a Faustine. Smokes : handsome girl : cruel small mouth : she’s of the class of interesting women one would be afraid to marry.”

Here follow long lists of books read, or looked into, or intended to be read, during the year.

CHAPTER XVII

MORE TOWN FRIENDS AND A NOVEL'S DISMEMBERMENT

1888-1889: *Act.* 48-49

RETURNING to Dorchester two days later, he notes down :
"Thought of the determination to enjoy. We see it in all nature, from the leaf on the tree to the titled lady at the ball. . . . It is achieved, of a sort, under superhuman difficulties. Like pent-up water it will find a chink of possibility somewhere. Even the most oppressed of men and animals find it, so that out of a thousand there is hardly one who has not a sun of some sort for his soul."

"*August* 5, 1888. To find beauty in ugliness is the province of the poet."

"8. The air is close, the sunshine suddenly disappears, and a bad kind of sea-fog comes up, smelling like a laundry or wash-house."

"19. Sent a story to H. Quilter, by request, for his Magazine, entitled *A Tragedy of Two Ambitions*."

"21. The literary productions of men of rigidly good family and rigidly correct education, mostly treat social conventions and contrivances—the artificial forms of living—as if they were cardinal facts of life.

"Society consists of Characters and No-characters—nine at least of the latter to one of the former."

"*September* 9. My Father says that Dick Facey used to rivet on the fetters of criminals when they were going off

by coach (Facey was journeyman for Clare the smith). He was always sent for secretly, that people might not know and congregate at the gaol entrance. They were carried away at night, a stage-coach being specially ordered. One K. of Troytown, on the London Road, a poacher, who was in the great fray at Westwood Barn near Lulworth Castle about 1825, was brought past his own door thus, on his way to transportation: he called to his wife and family; they heard his shout and ran out to bid him good-bye as he sat in chains. He was never heard of again by them.

"T. Voss used to take casts of heads of executed convicts. He took those of Preedy and Stone. Dan Pouncy held the heads while it was being done. Voss oiled the faces, and took them in halves, afterwards making casts from the masks. There was a groove where the rope went, and Voss saw a little blood in the case of Stone, where the skin had been broken,—not in Preedy's.

"*September 10.* Destitution sometimes reaches the point of grandeur in its pathetic grimness: *e.g.*, as shown in the statement of the lodging-house keeper in the White-chapel murder:

"'He had seen her in the lodging-house as late as half-past one o'clock or two that morning. He knew her as an unfortunate, and that she generally frequented Stratford for a living. He asked her for her lodging-money, when she said, 'I have not got it. I am weak and ill, and have been in the infirmary.' He told her that she knew the rules, whereupon she went out to get some money.' (*Times* report.)

"'O richest City in the world! 'She knew the rules.'"

"*September 15.* Visited the old White Horse Inn, Maiden Newton. Mullioned windows, queer old bedrooms. Fireplace in the late Perpendicular style. The landlady tells me that the attic was closed up for many years, and that on opening it they found a suit of clothes,

supposed to be those of a man who was murdered.” [This fine old Tudor inn is now pulled down.]

“*September 30.* ‘The Valley of the Great Dairies’.—Froom.

“‘The Valley of the Little Dairies’.—Blackmoor.

“In the afternoon by train to Evershot. Walked to Woolcombe, a property once owned by a—I think the senior—branch of the Hardys. Woolcombe House was to the left of where the dairy now is. On by the lane and path to Bubb-Down. Looking east you see High Stoy and the escarpment below it. The Vale of Blackmoor is almost entirely green, every hedge being studded with trees. On the left you see to an immense distance, including Shaftesbury.

“The decline and fall of the Hardys much in evidence hereabout. An instance: Becky S.’s mother’s sister married one of the Hardys of this branch, who was considered to have bemeaned himself by the marriage. ‘All Woolcombe and Froom Quintin belonged to them at one time,’ Becky used to say proudly. She might have added Up-Sydling and Toller Welme. This particular couple had an enormous lot of children. I remember when young seeing the man—tall and thin—walking beside a horse and common spring trap, and my mother pointing him out to me and saying he represented what was once the leading branch of the family. So we go down, down, down.”

“*October 7.* The besetting sin of modern literature is its insincerity. Half its utterances are qualified, even contradicted, by an aside, and this particularly in morals and religion. When dogma has to be balanced on its feet by such hair-splitting as the late Mr. M. Arnold’s it must be in a very bad way.”

“*October 15-21.* Has the tradition that Cerne-Abbas men have no whiskers any foundation in the fact of their being descendants of a family or tribe or clan who have

not intermarried with neighbours on account of their isolation? They are said to be hot-tempered people."

"Stephen B. says that he has 'never had the nerve' to be a bearer at a funeral. Now his brother George, who has plenty of nerve, has borne many neighbours to their graves.

"If you look beneath the surface of any farce you see a tragedy; and, on the contrary, if you blind yourself to the deeper issues of a tragedy you see a farce.

"My mother says that my [paternal] grandmother told her she was ironing her best muslin gown (then worn by young women at any season) when news came that the Queen of France was beheaded. She put down her iron, and stood still, the event so greatly affecting her mind. She remembered the pattern of the gown so well that she would recognize it in a moment." Hardy himself said that one hot and thundery summer in his childhood she remarked to him: "It was like this in the French Revolution, I remember."

"December 10. . . . He, she, had blundered; but not as the Prime Cause had blundered. He, she, had sinned; but not as the Prime Cause had sinned. He, she, was ashamed and sorry; but not as the Prime Cause would be ashamed and sorry if it knew." (The reference is unexplained.)

Among the letters received by Hardy for the New Year (1889) was one from Mr. Gosse, who wrote thanking him for *A Tragedy of Two Ambitions*, which he thought one of the most thrilling and most complete stories Hardy had written—"I walked under the moral burden of it for the remainder of the day. . . . I am truly happy—being an old faded leaf and disembowelled bloater and wet rag myself—to find your genius ever so fresh and springing."

They were in London the first week of the year, concerning which Hardy remarks:

"On arriving in London I notice more and more that it (viz. London proper—the central parts) is becoming a vast hotel or caravan, having no connection with Middle-

sex—whole streets which were not so very long ago mostly of private residences consisting entirely of lodging-houses, and having a slatternly look about them.”

“Called on Lady —. She is a slim girl still, and continually tells her age, and speaks practically of ‘before I was married’. Tells humorously of how she and Lord — her father, who is a nervous man, got to the church too soon, and drove drearily up and down the Thames Embankment till the right time. She has just now the fad of adoring art. When she can no longer endure the ugliness of London she goes down to the National Gallery and sits in front of the great Titian.”

“*January 8.* To the City. Omnibus horses, Ludgate Hill. The greasy state of the streets caused constant slipping. The poor creatures struggled and struggled but could not start the omnibus. A man next me said: ‘It must take all heart and hope out of them! I shall get out.’ He did; but the whole remaining selfish twenty-five of us sat on. The horses despairingly got us up the hill at last. I *ought* to have taken off my hat to him and said: ‘Sir, though I was not stirred by your humane impulse I will profit by your good example’; and have followed him. I should like to know that man; but we shall never meet again!”

“*January 9.* At the Old Masters, Royal Academy. Turner’s water-colours: each is a landscape *plus* a man’s soul. . . . What he paints chiefly is *light as modified by objects*. He first recognizes the impossibility of really reproducing on canvas all that is in a landscape; then gives for that which cannot be reproduced a something else which shall have upon the spectator an approximative effect to that of the real. He said, in his maddest and greatest days: ‘What pictorial drug can I dose man with, which shall affect his eyes somewhat in the manner of this reality which I cannot carry to him?’—and set to make such strange mixtures as he was tending towards in ‘Rain,

Steam and Speed', 'The Burial of Wilkie', 'Agrippina landing with the ashes of Germanicus', 'Approach to Venice', 'Snowstorm and a Steamboat', etc. Hence, one may say, Art is the secret of how to produce by a false thing the effect of a true. . . .

"I am struck by the red glow of Romney's backgrounds, and his red flesh shades Watteau paints claws for hands. They are unnatural—hideous sometimes. . . . Then the pictures of Sir Joshua, in which middle-aged people sit out of doors without hats, on damp stone seats under porticoes, and expose themselves imprudently to draughts and chills, as if they had lost their senses. . . . Besides the above there were also the Holls, and the works of other recent English painters, such as Maclise. . . .

"How Time begins to lift the veil and show us by degrees the truly great men among these, as distinct from the vaunted and the fashionable. The false glow thrown on them by their generation dies down, and we see them as they are."

"*January* 28. Alfred Parsons the landscape painter here. He gave as a reason for living in London and mixing a good deal with people (intellectual I presume) that you can let them do your thinking for you. A practice that will be disastrous to A. P.'s brush, I fear."

"*February* 6. (After reading Plato's dialogue 'Cratylus'): A very good way of looking at things would be to regard everything as having an actual or false name, and an intrinsic or true name, to ascertain which all endeavour should be made. . . . The fact is that nearly all things are falsely, or rather inadequately, named."

"*February* 19. The story of a face which goes through three generations or more, would make a fine novel or poem of the passage of Time. The differences in personality to be ignored." [This idea was to some extent carried out in the novel *The Well-Beloved*, the poem entitled "Heredity" etc.]

"*February 26.* In time one might get to regard every object, and every action, as composed, not of this or that material, this or that movement, but of the qualities pleasure and pain in varying proportions."

"*March 1.* In a Botticelli the soul is outside the body, permeating its spectator with its emotions. In a Rubens the flesh is without, and the soul (possibly) within. The very odour of the flesh is distinguishable in the latter."

"*March 4.* A Village story recalled to me yesterday :

"Mary L., a handsome wench, had come to Bockhampton, leaving a lover at Askerswell, her native parish. William K. fell in love with her at the new place. The old lover, who was a shoemaker, smelling a rat, came anxiously to see her, with a present of a dainty pair of shoes he had made. He met her by chance at the pathway stile, but alas, on the arm of the other lover. In the rage of love the two men fought for her till they were out of breath, she looking on and holding both their hats the while; till William, wiping his face, said : 'Now, Polly, which of we two do you love best ? Say it out straight !' She would not state then, but said she would consider (the hussy !). The young man to whom she had been fickle left her indignantly—throwing the shoes at her and her new lover as he went. She never saw or heard of him again, and accepted the other. *But she kept the shoes, and was married in them.* I knew her well as an old woman."

"*March 15.* What has been written cannot be blotted. Each new style of novel must be the old with added ideas, not an ignoring and avoidance of the old. And so of religion, and a good many other things !"

"*April 5.* London. Four million forlorn hopes !"

"*April 7.* A woeful fact—that the human race is too extremely developed for its corporeal conditions, the nerves being evolved to an activity abnormal in such an environment. Even the higher animals are in excess in this respect. It may be questioned if Nature, or what we

call Nature, so far back as when she crossed the line from invertebrates to vertebrates, did not exceed her mission. This planet does not supply the materials for happiness to higher existences. Other planets may, though one can hardly see how."

A day or two later brought him a long and interesting letter from J. Addington Symonds at Davos Platz concerning *The Return of the Native*, which he had just met with and read, and dwelling enthusiastically on "its vigour and its freshness and its charm". The last week in April they went off to London again for a few months, staying at the West Central Hotel till they could find something more permanent, which this year chanced to be two furnished floors in Monmouth Road, Bayswater.

"May 5. Morning. Sunday. To Bow Church, Cheapside, with Em. The classic architecture, especially now that it has been regilt and painted, makes one feel in Rome. About twenty or thirty people present. When you enter, the curate from the reading-desk and the rector from the chancel almost smile a greeting as they look up in their surplices, so glad are they that you have condescended to visit them in their loneliness."

"That which, socially, is a great tragedy, may be in Nature no alarming circumstance."

"May 12. Evening. Sunday. To St. James's, Westmoreland Street, with Em. Heard Haweis—a small lame figure who could with difficulty climb into the pulpit. His black hair, black beard, hollow cheeks and black gown, made him look like one of the skeletons in the Church of the Capuchins, Rome. The subject of his discourse was Cain and Abel, his first proposition being that Cain had excellent qualities, and was the larger character of the twain, though Abel might have been the better man in some things. Yet, he reminded us, good people are very irritating sometimes, and the occasion was probably one of agricultural depression like the present, so that Cain

said to himself: "'Tis this year as it was last year, and all my labour wasted !' (titter from the congregation). Altogether the effect was comical. But one sympathized with the preacher, he was so weak, and quite in a perspiration when he had finished."

"*May 20.* Called on the Alma-Tademas. Tadema is like a school-boy, with untidy hair, a sturdy inquiring look, and bustling manner. I like this phase of him better than his man-of-the-world phase. He introduced me to M. Taine, a kindly, nicely trimmed old man with a slightly bent head."

Earlier in the year Hardy had asked one of the Miss Sheridans, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. Brinsley Sheridan, Hardy's neighbours at Frampton Court, Dorset, if she could sing to him "How oft, Louisa !" the once celebrated song in her ancestor's comic opera "The Duenna" (It was not a woman's song, by the way). His literary sense was shocked by her telling him that she had never heard of it, since he himself had sung it as a youth, having in fact been in love with a Louisa himself. Now he was in London he remembered that he had promised it to her, and looked for a copy, but, much to his surprise, to find one seemed beyond his power. At last he called at a second-hand music-shop that used to stand where the Oxford Circus Tube-Station now is, and repeated hopelessly, "How oft, Louisa ?" The shop was kept by an old man, who was sitting on an office stool in a rusty dress-suit and very tall hat, and at the sound of the words he threw himself back in his seat, spread his arms like an opera-singer, and sang in a withered voice by way of answer :

"How oft, Louisa, hast thou told,
 (Nor wilt thou the fond boast disown)
 Thou would'st not lose Antonio's love
 To reign the partner of a throne !

"Ah, that carries me back to times that will never

return!" he added. "Yes; when I was a young man it was my favourite song. As to my having it, why, certainly, it is here *somewhere*. But I could not find it in a week." Hardy left him singing it, promising to return again.

When his shop was pulled down the delightful old man disappeared, and though Hardy searched for him afterwards he never saw him any more.

"May 29. That girl in the omnibus had one of those faces of marvellous beauty which are seen casually in the streets but never among one's friends. It was perfect in its softened classicality—a Greek face translated into English. Moreover she was fair, and her hair pale chestnut. Where do these women come from? Who marries them? Who knows them?"

They went to picture-galleries, concerts, French plays, and the usual lunches and dinners during the season; and in June Hardy ran down to Dorchester for a day or two, on which occasion, taking a walk in the meadows, he remarks: "The birds are so passionately happy that they introduce variations into their songs to an outrageous degree—which are not always improvements."

In London anew: "One difference between the manners of the intellectual middle class and of the nobility is that the latter have more flexibility, almost a dependence on their encompassment, as if they were waiting upon future events; while the former are direct, and energetic, and crude, as if they were manufacturing a future to please them."

"July 9. Love lives on propinquity, but dies of contact."

"July 14. Sunday. Centenary of the fall of the Bastille. Went to Newton Hall to hear Frederic Harrison lecture on the French Revolution. The audience sang 'The Marseillaise'. Very impressive."

"July 23. Of the people I have met this summer, the lady whose mouth recalls more fully than any other

beauty's the Elizabethan metaphor 'Her lips are roses full of snow' (or is it Lodge's?) is Mrs. Hamo Thornycroft—whom I talked to at Gosse's dinner."

"*July 24. B. Museum:*

"Εἰ δέ τι πρεσβύτερον, etc. *Soph. Oed. Tyr.* 1365 ('and if there be a woe surpassing woes, it hath become the portion of Oedipus'—Jebb. Cf. Tennyson: 'a deeper deep')."

About this time Hardy was asked by a writer of some experience in adapting novels for the theatre—Mr. J. T. Grein—if he would grant permission for *The Woodlanders* to be so adapted. In his reply he says:

"You have probably observed that the ending of the story—hinted rather than stated—is that the heroine is doomed to an unhappy life with an inconstant husband. I could not accentuate this strongly in the book, by reason of the conventions of the libraries, etc. Since the story was written, however, truth to character is not considered quite such a crime in literature as it was formerly; and it is therefore a question for you whether you will accent this ending, or prefer to obscure it."

It appears that nothing arose out of the dramatization, it becoming obvious that no English manager at this date would venture to defy the formalities to such an extent as was required by the novel, in which some of the situations were approximately of the kind afterwards introduced to English playgoers by translations from Ibsen.

At the end of the month they gave up their rooms in Bayswater and returned to Dorchester; where during August Hardy settled down daily to writing the new story he had conceived, which was *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, though it had not as yet been christened. During the month he jots down as a casual thought:

"When a married woman who has a lover kills her husband, she does not really wish to kill the husband; she wishes to kill the situation. Of course in Clytaemnestra's

case it was not exactly so, since there was the added grievance of Iphigenia, which half-justified her."

"September 21. For carrying out that idea of Napoleon, the Empress, Pitt, Fox, etc., I feel continually that I require a larger canvas. . . . A spectral tone must be adopted. . . . Royal ghosts. . . . Title: 'A Drama of Kings'. [He did not use it, however; preferring *The Dynasts*.]

"October 13. Three wooden-legged men used to dance a three-handed reel at Broadmayne, so my father says."

In November Leslie Stephen wrote concerning a Dorset character for the *Dictionary of National Biography*, then in full progress under his hands:

"I only beg that you will not get into the Dictionary yourself. You can avoid it by living a couple of years—hardly a great price to pay for the exemption. But I will not answer for my grandson, who will probably edit a supplement."

About the same time Hardy answered some questions by Mr. Gosse:

"'Oak-apple day' is exotic; 'sic-sac day' or 'shic-sac day', being what the peasantry call it.

"'Ich.' This and kindred words, e.g.—'Ich woll', 'er woll', etc. are still used by old people in N.W. Dorset and Somerset (*vide* Gammer Oliver's conversation in *The Woodlanders*, which is an attempted reproduction). I heard 'Ich' only last Sunday; but it is dying rapidly."

However, the business immediately in hand was the new story *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, for the serial use of which Hardy had three requests, if not more, on his list; and in October as much of it as was written was offered to the first who had asked for it, the editor of *Murray's Magazine*. It was declined and returned to him in the middle of November virtually on the score of its improper explicitness. It was at once sent on to the second, the editor of *Macmillan's Magazine*, and on the 25th was declined by him for practically the same reason. Hardy would now

have much preferred to finish the story and bring it out in volume form only, but there were reasons why he could not afford to do this ; and he adopted a plan till then, it is believed, unprecedented in the annals of fiction. This was not to offer the novel intact to the third editor on his list (his experience with the first two editors having taught him that it would be useless to send it to the third as it stood), but to send it up with some chapters or parts of chapters cut out, and instead of destroying these to publish them, or much of them, elsewhere, if practicable, as episodic adventures of anonymous personages (which in fact was done, with the omission of a few paragraphs) ; till they could be put back in their places at the printing of the whole in volume form. In addition several passages were modified. Hardy carried out this unceremonious concession to conventionality with cynical amusement, knowing the novel was moral enough and to spare. But the work was sheer drudgery, the modified passages having to be written in coloured ink, that the originals might be easily restored, and he frequently asserted that it would have been almost easier for him to write a new story altogether. Hence the labour brought no profit. He resolved to get away from the supply of family fiction to magazines as soon as he conveniently could do so.

However, the treatment was a complete success, and the mutilated novel was accepted by the editor of the *Graphic*, the third editor on Hardy's list, and an arrangement came to for beginning it in the pages of that paper in July 1891. It may be mentioned that no complaint of impropriety in its cut-down form was made by readers, except by one gentleman with a family of daughters, who thought the blood-stain on the ceiling indecent—Hardy could never understand why.

“*December 1.* It was the custom at Stinsford down to 1820 or so to take a corpse to church on the Sunday of the funeral, and let it remain in the nave through the service,

after which the burial took place. The people liked the custom, and always tried to keep a corpse till Sunday. The funeral psalms were used for the psalms of the day, and the funeral chapter for the second lesson."

"*December* 13. Read in the papers that Browning died at Venice yesterday." He was buried in Westminster Abbey on December 31.

"'Incidents in the development of a soul! little else is worth study.'—Browning.

"What the *Athenæum* says is true, though not all the truth, that intellectual subtlety is the disturbing element in his art."

Among other poems written about this time was the one called "At Middle-Field Gate in February", describing the field-women of the author's childhood. On the present writer's once asking Hardy the names of those he calls the "bevy now underground", he said they were Unity Sargent, Susan Chamberlain, Esther Oliver, Emma Shipton, Anna Barrett, Ann West, Elizabeth Hurden, Eliza Trevis, and others, who had been young women about twenty when he was a child.

CHAPTER XVIII

OBSERVATIONS ON PEOPLE AND THINGS

1890: *Act.* 49-50

"*January* 5. Looking over old *Punches*. Am struck with the frequent wrong direction of satire, and of commendation, when seen by the light of later days."

"*January* 29. I have been looking for God 50 years, and I think that if he had existed I should have discovered him. As an external personality, of course—the only true meaning of the word."

"*March* 5. A staid, worn, weak man at the railway station. His back, his legs, his hands, his face, were longing to be out of the world. His brain was not longing to be, because, like the brain of most people, it was the last part of his body to realize a situation.

"In the train on the way to London. Wrote the first four or six lines of 'Not a line of her writing have I'. It was a curious instance of sympathetic telepathy. The woman whom I was thinking of—a cousin—was dying at the time, and I quite in ignorance of it. She died six days later. The remainder of the piece was not written till after her death."

"*March* 15. With E. to a crush at the Jeunes'. Met Mrs. T. and her great eyes in a corner of the rooms, as if washed up by the surging crowd. The most beautiful woman present. . . . But these women! If put into rough wrappers in a turnip-field, where would their beauty be?"

He observes later in respect of such scenes as these:

"Society, *collectively*, has neither seen what any ordinary person can see, read what every ordinary person has read, nor thought what every ordinary person has thought."

"*March—April:*

"Altruism, or The Golden Rule, or whatever 'Love your Neighbour as Yourself' may be called, will ultimately be brought about I think by the pain we see in others reacting on ourselves, as if we and they were a part of one body. Mankind, in fact, may be and possibly will be viewed as members of one corporeal frame."

"Tories will often do by way of exception to their principles more extreme acts of democratism or broad-mindedness than Radicals do by rule—such as help on promising plebeians, tolerate wild beliefs, etc."

"Art consists in so depicting the common events of life as to bring out the features which illustrate the author's idiosyncratic mode of regard; making old incidents and things seem as new."

"*Easter.* Sir George Douglas came. Went to Barnes's grave with him; next day to Portland. Lunched at the Mermaid.

"In an article on Ibsen in the *Fortnightly* the writer says that his manner is wrong. That the drama, like the novel, should not be for edification. In this I think the writer errs. It should be so, but the edified should not perceive the edification. Ibsen's edifying is too obvious."

"*April 26.* View the Prime Cause or Invariable Antecedent as 'It' and recount its doings." [This was done in *The Dynasts*.]

In May the Hardys were again resident in London, and went their customary round of picture-viewing, luncheons, calls, dinners, and receptions. At the Academy he reminds himself of old Academy exhibitions, *e.g.*, the years in which there was a rail round Frith's pictures, and of the curious effect upon an observer of the fashionable crowd—seeming like people moving about under enchant-

ment, or as somnambulists. At an evening service at St. George's, Hanover Square, "everything looks the Modern World: the electric light and old theology seem strange companions; and the sermon was as if addressed to native tribes of primitive simplicity, and not to the Nineteenth-Century English." Coming out of church he went into the Criterion for supper, where, first going to the second floor, he stumbled into a room whence proceeded "low laughter and murmurs, the light of lamps with pink shades; where the men were all in evening clothes, ringed and studded, and the women much uncovered in the neck and heavily jewelled, their glazed and lamp-blackened eyes wandering". He descended and had his supper in the grill-room.

"May 9. MS. of *A Group of Noble Dames* sent to *The Graphic* as promised.

"In the streets I see patient hundreds, labouring on, and boxes on wheels packed with men and women. There are charcoal trees in the squares. A man says: 'When one is half-drunk London seems a wonderfully enjoyable place, with its lamps, and cabs moving like fire-flies.' Yes, man has done more with his materials than God has done with his."

"A physician cannot cure a disease, but he can change its mode of expression."

"May 15. Coming home from seeing Irving in *The Bells*. Between 11 and 12. The 4,000,000 suggest their existence now, when one sees the brilliancy about Piccadilly Circus at this hour, and notices the kiln-dried features around."

At Mr. Gosse's this month they met Miss Balestier—an attractive and thoughtful young woman on her first visit to England from America, who remarked to him that it was so reposeful over here; "In America you feel at night, 'I must be quick and sleep; there is not much time to give to it'." She afterwards became Mrs. Rudyard Kipling. About the same date Hardy also met—it is

probable for the first time—Mr. Kipling himself. “He talked about the East, and he well said that the East is the world, both in numbers and in experiences. It has passed through our present bustling stages, and has become quiescent. He told curious details of Indian life.”

Hardy remarks that June 2 is his fiftieth birthday : and during the month went frequently to the Savile Club, sometimes dining there with acquaintances, among others J. H. Middleton, Slade Professor of Fine Art at Cambridge. Hardy used to find fault with Middleton as having no sense of life as such ; as one who would talk, for instance, about bishops’ copes and mitres with an earnest, serious, anxious manner, as if there were no cakes and ale in the world, or laughter and tears, or human misery beyond tears. His sense of art had caused him to lose all sense of relativity, and of art’s subsidiary relation to existence.

This season also Hardy seems to have had a humour for going the round of the music-halls, and pronounces upon the beauties “whose lustrous eyes and pearly countenances show that they owe their attractions to art”, that they are seldom well-formed physically ; notes the “round-hatted young men gaping at the stage, with receding chins and rudimentary mouths” ; and comments upon the odd fact that though there were so many obvious drunkards around him, the character on the stage which always gave the most delight was that of a drunkard imitated. At Bizet’s opera of *Carmen* he was struck, as he had been struck before, with the manner in which people conducted themselves on the operatic stage ; that of being “possessed, maudlin, distraught, as if they lived on a planet whose atmosphere was intoxicating”. At a ballet at the Alhambra he noticed “the air of docile obedience on the faces of some of the dancing women, a passive resignation like that of a plodding horse, as if long accustomed to correction. Also marks of fatigue. The morality of actresses, dancers, etc., cannot be judged by the same standard as that of

people who lead slower lives. Living in a throbbing atmosphere they are perforce throbbled by it in spite of themselves. We should either put down these places altogether because of their effect upon the performers, or forgive the performers as irresponsibles. . . . The Première Danseuse strokes each calf with the sole of her other foot like a fly—on her mouth hanging a perpetual smile.”

“June 23. Called on Arthur Locker [editor] at the *Graphic* office in answer to his letter. He says he does not object to the stories [*A Group of Noble Dames*] but the Directors do. Here’s a pretty job! Must smooth down these Directors somehow I suppose.”

In the same month he met Mr. (afterwards Sir) H. M. Stanley, the explorer, at a dinner given by the publishers of his travels. Hardy does not seem to have been much attracted by his personality. He observed that Stanley was shorter than himself, “with a disdainful curve on his mouth and look in his eye which would soon become resentment”. He made a speech in the worst taste, in Hardy’s opinion, being to the effect that everybody who had had to do with producing his book was, rightly, delighted with the honour. At the same dinner Hardy talked to Du Chaillu, who had also spoken a few words. Hardy asked him: “Why didn’t you claim more credit for finding those dwarfs?” The good-natured Du Chaillu said with a twinkle: “Noh, noh! It is *his* dinner.” Hardy also made the acquaintance of the Bishop of Ripon at that dinner, from what he says: “He [the Bishop] has a nice face—a sort of ingenuous archness in it—as if he would be quite willing to let supernaturalism down easy, if he could.”

At the police courts, where just at this time he occasionally spent half an hour, being still compelled to get novel padding, he noticed that “the public” appeared to be mostly represented by grimy gentlemen who had had previous experience of the courts from a position in the dock: that there were people sitting round an anteroom of

the courts as if waiting for the doctor; that the character of the witness usually deteriorated under cross-examination; and that the magistrate's spectacles as a rule endeavoured to flash out a strictly just manner combined with as much generosity as justice would allow.

On the last day of the month he wound up his series of visits to London entertainments and law-offices with the remark, "Am getting tired of investigating life at music-halls and police-courts". About the same time he lost his friend Lord Carnarvon, who had written with prophetic insight when proposing him for the Athenæum that it would have been better if his proposer had been a younger man. Before leaving London he met Miss Ada Rehan, for whom he had a great liking, and, in some of her parts, admiration, that of the Shrew being of course one of them. He says of her: "A kindly natured, winning woman with really a heart. I fear she is wearing herself out with too hard work." Two days later they were present at the Lyceum to see her as Rosalind in *As you like it*. She was not so real—indeed could not be—in the character as in *The Shrew*. Before starting Hardy wrote: "Am going with E. to see Rosalind, after not seeing her for more than twenty years. This time she is composed of Ada Rehan." After going he added: "At the end of the second act I went round, and found her alone, in a highly strung throbbing state—and rather despondent. 'O yes—it goes smoothly,' she said. 'But I am in a whirlwind. . . . Well, it is an old thing, and Mr. Daly liked to produce it!' I endeavoured to assure her that it was going to be satisfactory, and perhaps succeeded, for in the remaining acts she played full of spirit." It is possible that the dramatic poem entitled "The Two Rosalinds" was suggested by this performance combined with some other; but there is no certainty about this, and dates and other characteristics do not quite accord.

Mrs. Hardy had to leave London shortly after, on

account of the illness and death of her father ; but her husband had promised to write an Epilogue to be spoken by Miss Rehan at a performance on behalf of Mrs. Jeune's Holiday Fund for Children. So he remained in London till he had written it, and it had been duly delivered. He did not go himself to the performance, but in the evening of the same day was present at a debate at the St. James's Hall between Messrs. Hyndman and Bradlaugh, in which he was much struck by the extraordinary force in the features of the latter.

"*July 24.* Mary Jeune delighted with the verses : says Miss Rehan's hand shook so much when she read them that she seemed scarcely able to follow the lines."

"*August 5.* Reflections on Art. Art is a changing of the actual proportions and order of things, so as to bring out more forcibly than might otherwise be done that feature in them which appeals most strongly to the idiosyncrasy of the artist. The changing, or distortion, may be of two kinds : (1) The kind which increases the sense of vraisemblance : (2) That which diminishes it. (1) is high art : (2) is low art.

"High art may choose to depict evil as well as good, without losing its quality. Its choice of evil, however, must be limited by the sense of worthiness." A continuation of the same note was made a little later, and can be given here :

"Art is a disproportioning—(*i.e.*, distorting, throwing out of proportion)—of realities, to show more clearly the features that matter in those realities, which, if merely copied or reported inventorially, might possibly be observed, but would more probably be overlooked. Hence 'realism' is not Art."

"*August 8-17.* With E. to Weymouth and back. Alfred Parsons [R.A.] came. Went to see some Sir Joshuas and Pinturicchios belonging to Pearce-Edgcumbe. Then drove to Weymouth over Ridgeway Hill with Parsons. Lunch at

the Royal." This was the Old Royal Hotel, now pulled down, where George III. and his daughters used to dance at the town assemblies, a red cord dividing the royal dancers from the townspeople. The sockets for the standards bearing the cord were still visible in the floor while the building was standing.

Later in this month of August Hardy started with his brother for Paris by way of Southampton and Havre, leaving the former port at night, when "the Jersey boat and ours were almost overwhelmed by the enormous bulk of the 'Magdalena' (Brazil and River Plate)—the white figure of her at the ship's head stretching into the blue-black sky above us". The journey was undertaken by Hardy solely on his brother's account, and they merely went the usual round of sight-seeing. As was the case with Hardy almost always, a strangely bizarre effect was noticed by him at the *Moulin Rouge*—in those days a very popular place of entertainment. As everybody knows, or knew, it was close to the cemetery of Montmartre, being, it seems, only divided therefrom by a wall and erection or two, and as he stood somewhere in the building looking down at the young women dancing the *cancan*, and grimacing at the men, it appears that he could see through some back windows over their heads to the last resting-place of so many similar gay Parisians silent under the moonlight, and, as he notes, to near the grave of Heinrich Heine.

Coming back towards Havre he sees "A Cleopatra in the railway carriage. Her French husband sits opposite, and seems to study her; to keep wondering why he married her; and why she married him. She is a good-natured amative creature by her voice, and her heavy moist lips."

The autumn was passed in the country, visiting and entertaining neighbours, and attending garden-parties. In September, to their great grief, their watch-dog "Moss" died—an affectionate retriever whose grave can still be seen at Max Gate.

In the latter part of this year, having finished adapting *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* for the serial issue, he seems to have dipped into a good many books—mostly the satirists: including Horace, Martial, Lucian, “the Voltaire of Paganism”, Voltaire himself, Cervantes, Le Sage, Molière, Dryden, Fielding, Smollett, Swift, Byron, Heine, Carlyle, Thackeray, *Satires and Profanities* by James Thomson, and Weismann’s *Essays on Heredity*.

In December, staying in London, Hardy chanced to find himself in political circles for a time, though he never sought them. At one house he was a fellow-guest with Mr. (afterwards Lord) Goschen, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the “I forgot Goschen” story was still going about. At another house just afterwards he chanced to converse with the then Dowager Duchess of Marlborough, Lord Randolph Churchill’s mother: “She is a nice warm-feeling woman, and expressed her grief at what had happened to her son, though her hostess had told her flatly it was his own doing. She deplores that young men like —— should stand in the fore-front of the Tory party, and her son should be nowhere. She says he has learnt by bitter experience, and would take any subordinate position the Government might offer him. Poor woman—I was sorry for her, as she really suffers about it. Parnell, however, was the main thing talked about, and not Randolph.”

“*December 4.* I am more than ever convinced that persons are successively various persons, according as each special strand in their characters is brought uppermost by circumstances.”

“*December 8* onwards. Lodging at the Jeunes. Lord Rowton, who is great on lodging-houses, says I am her ‘dosser’.”

“*December 18.* Mr. E. Clodd this morning gives an excellently neat answer to my question why the superstitions of a remote Asiatic and a Dorset labourer are the same: ‘The attitude of man’, he says, ‘at corresponding

levels of culture, before like phenomena, is pretty much the same, your Dorset peasants representing the persistence of the barbaric idea which confuses persons and things, and founds wide generalizations on the slenderest analogies.'

"(This 'barbaric idea which confuses persons and things' is, by the way, also common to the highest imaginative genius—that of the poet.)"

"*Christmas Day.* While thinking of resuming 'the viewless wings of poesy' before dawn this morning, new horizons seemed to open, and worrying pettinesses to disappear.

"Heard to-day an old country tradition; that if a woman goes off her own premises before being churched, *e.g.*, crosses a road that forms the boundary of her residence—she may be made to do penance, or be excommunicated. I cannot explain this, but it reminds me of what old Mr. Hibbs of Bere Regis told me lately; that a native of that place, now ninety, says he remembers a young woman doing penance in Bere Church for singing scandalous songs about 'a great lady'. The girl stood in a white sheet while she went through 'the service of penance', whatever that was.

"Also heard another curious story. Mil [Amelia] C—— had an illegitimate child by the parish doctor. She christened him all the doctor's names, which happened to be a mouthful—Frederick Washington Ingen—and always called him by the three names complete. Moreover the doctor had a squint, and to identify him still more fully as the father she hung a bobbin from the baby's cap between his eyes, and so trained him to squint likewise."

Next day they lunched with a remote cousin of Hardy's on the maternal side—Dr. Christopher Childs of Weymouth—to meet his brother and sister-in-law Mr. and Mrs. Borlase Childs on a visit from Cornwall, and heard from Borlase Childs (whose grandfather had married into

the Borlase family) some traditions of his and Hardy's common ancestors, on which Hardy remarks: "The Christopher Childs, brother of my great-grandmother, who left Dorset, was a Jacobite, which accounted for the fall in their fortunes. There is also a tradition—that I had heard before from my mother—that one of the family added the 's' to the name, and that it was connected with the Josiah Child who founded Child's Bank, and with the family of Lord Jersey. I doubt the first statement, and have no real evidence of the latter."

"*New Year's Eve.* Looked out of doors just before twelve, and was confronted by the toneless white of the snow spread in front, against which stood the row of pines breathing out: "'Tis no better with us than with the rest of creation, you see!'" I could not hear the church bells."

CHAPTER XIX

THE NOVEL "TESS" RESTORED AND PUBLISHED

1891: *Aet.* 50-51

At the beginning of January 1891, he was at home arranging *A Group of Noble Dames* for publication in a volume. He was also in London a part of the month, where he saw "what is called sunshine up here—a red-hot bullet hanging in a livid atmosphere—reflected from window-panes in the form of bleared copper eyes, and inflaming the sheets of plate-glass with smears of gory light. A drab snow mingled itself with liquid horsedung, and in the river puddings of ice moved slowly on. The steamers were moored, with snow on their gangways. A captain, in sad solitude, smoked his pipe against the bulk-head of the cabin stairs. The lack of traffic made the water like a stream through a deserted metropolis. In the City George Peabody sat comfortably in his easy chair, with snow on the folds of his ample waistcoat, the top of his bare head, and shoulders, and knees."

After seeing Irving at the Lyceum, and admiring the staging: "But, after all, scenic perfection such as this only banishes one plane further back the jarring point between illusion and disillusion. You must have it *somewhere*, and begin calling in 'make believe' forthwith, and it may as well be soon as late—immediate as postponed—and no elaborate scenery be attempted.

"I don't care about the fashionable first night at a play :

it is so insincere, meretricious; the staginess behind the footlights seems to flow over upon the audience."

On the Sunday following a number of people dined at the house where Hardy was staying. "Presently Ellen Terry arrived—diaphanous—a sort of balsam or sea-anemone, without shadow. Also Irving, Sir Henry Thompson, Evelyn Ashley, Lady Dorothy [Nevill], Justin McCarthy, and many others. Ellen Terry was like a machine in which, if you press a spring, all the works fly open. E. Ashley's laugh is like a clap, or report; it was so loud that it woke the children asleep on the third floor. Lady Dorothy said she collected death's-heads—(what did she mean?). Ashley told me about his electioneering experiences. The spectacle of another guest—a Judge of the Supreme Court—telling broad stories with a broad laugh in a broad accent, after the ladies had gone, reminded one of Baron Nicholson of 'Judge-and-Jury' fame. 'Tom' Hughes and Miss Hughes came in after dinner. Miss Hilda Gorst said that at dinner we made such a noise at our end of the table that at her end they wondered what we had to amuse us so much. (That's how it always seems.) . . . A great crush of people afterwards, till at one o'clock they dwindled away, leaving nothing but us, blank, on the wide polished floor."

At the end of the month he and his wife were at a ball at Mrs. Sheridan's at Frampton Court, Dorset, where he saw a friend of his "waltzing round with a face of ambition, not of slightest pleasure, as if he were saying to himself 'this has to be done'. We are all inveterate joy-makers: some do it more successfully than others; and the actual fabrication is hardly pleasure."

"*February 10.* Newman and Carlyle. The former's was a feminine nature, which first decides and then finds reasons for having decided. He was an enthusiast with the absurd reputation of a logician and reasoner. Carlyle was a poet with the reputation of a philosopher. Neither was truly a *thinker*."

On the 21st Hardy notes that Mrs. Hardy rode on horse-back for what turned out to be the last time in her life. It was to Mrs. Sheridan's at Frampton, and a train crossed a bridge overhead, causing the mare to rear; but happily not throwing the rider. Very few horses could.

In March they were again in London. A deep snow came on shortly after, but they had got home. It was in drifts:

"Sculptured, scooped, gouged, pared, trowelled, moulded, by the wind. Em says it is architectural. . . . A person aged 50 is an old man in winter and a young man in summer. . . . Was told by J. A. of a poor young fellow who is dying of consumption, so that he has to sit up in the night, and to get up because he cannot sleep. Yet he described to my informant that one night he had such a funny dream of pigs knocking down a thatcher's ladder that he lay awake laughing uncontrollably."

In the same month Hardy erected what he called "The Druid Stone" on the lawn at Max Gate. This was a large block they discovered about three feet underground in the garden, and the labour of getting it from the hole where it had lain for perhaps two thousand years was a heavy one even for seven men with levers and other appliances.— "It was a primitive problem in mechanics, and the scene was such a one as may have occurred in building the Tower of Babel." Round the stone, which had been lying flat, they had found a quantity of ashes and half charred bones.

Though Hardy was at this time putting the finishing touches to *Tess* he was thinking of "A Bird's-Eye View of Europe at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century. . . . It may be called 'A Drama of the Times of the First Napoleon'." He does not appear to have done more than think of it at this date.

In April he was at a morning performance at the old Olympic Theatre of that once popular play *The Stranger*

by Kotzebue; and he "thought of the eyes and ears that had followed the acting first and last, including Thackeray's." Miss Winifred Emery was Mrs. Haller on this occasion. During his time in London he notes the difference between English and French stage-dancing; "The English girls dance as if they had learned dancing; the French as if dancing had produced them." He also while in Town dined at the Lushingtons' "and looked at the portrait of Lushington's father, who had known Lady Byron's secret". He went to hear Spurgeon preach, for the first and last time. As Spurgeon died soon after he was glad he had gone, the preacher having been a great force in his day, though it had been spent for many years. He witnessed the performance of *Hedda Gabler* at the Vaudeville, on which he remarks that it seems to him that the rule for staging nowadays should be to have no scene which would not be physically possible in the time of acting. [An idea carried out years after in *The Queen of Cornwall*.]

The Hardys were now as usual looking for a place in which to spend three or four months in London. Much as they disliked handling other people's furniture, taking on their breakages, cracks, and stains, and paying for them at the end of the season as if they had made them themselves, there was no help for it in their inability to afford a London house or flat all the year round. "The dirty house-fronts, leaning gate-piers, rusty gates, broken bells, Doré monstrosities of womankind who showed us the rooms, left Em nearly fainting, and at one place she could not stay for the drawing-room floor to be exhibited." They found a flat at last in Mandeville Place, just about the time that Hardy learnt of his being elected to the Athenæum Club by the Committee under Rule 2.

"April 28. Talking to Kipling to-day at the Savile, he said that he once as an experiment took the ideas of some mature writer or speaker (on Indian politics, I think) and

translating them into his own language used them as his. They were pronounced to be the crude ideas of an immature boy."

The Royal Academy this year struck Hardy as containing some good colouring but no creative power, and that as visitors went by names only the new geniuses, even if there were any, were likely to be overlooked. He recalled in respect of the fair spring and summer landscapes that "They were not pictures of *this* spring and summer, although they seem to be so. All this green grass and fresh leafage perished yesterday; after withering and falling, it is gone like a dream."

In the Gallery of the English Art Club: "If I were a painter, I would paint a picture of a room as viewed by a mouse from a chink under the skirting."

Hardy's friend Dr. (afterwards Sir) Joshua Fitch took him over Whitelands Training College for schoolmistresses, where it was the custom in those days, and maybe now, to choose a May Queen every year, a custom originated by Ruskin. Hardy did not, however, make any observation on this, but merely: "A community of women, especially young women, inspires not reverence but protective tenderness in the breast of one who views them. Their belief in circumstances, in convention, in the rightness of things, which you know to be not only wrong but damnably wrong, makes the heart ache, even when they are waspish and hard. . . . You feel how entirely the difference of their ideas from yours is of the nature of misunderstanding. . . . There is much that is pathetic about these girls, and I wouldn't have missed the visit for anything. How far nobler in its aspirations is the life here than the life of those I met at the crush two nights back!"

Piccadilly at night. "A girl held a long-stemmed narcissus to my nose as we went by each other. At the Circus, among all the wily crew, there was a little innocent family standing waiting, I suppose for an omnibus.

How pure they looked! A man on a stretcher, with a bloody bandage round his head, was wheeled past by two policemen, stragglers following. Such is Piccadilly."

He used to see Piccadilly under other aspects however, for the next day, Sunday, he attended the service at St. James's—as he did off and on for many years—because it was the church his mother had been accustomed to go to when as a young woman she was living for some months in London. "The preacher said that only five per cent of the inhabitants entered a church, according to the Bishop of London. On coming out there was a drizzle across the electric lights, and the paper-boys were shouting, not, 'Go to church!' but, 'Wee-naw of the French Oaks!'"

Next day—wet—at the British Museum: "Crowds parading and gaily traipsing round the mummies, thinking to-day is for ever, and the girls casting sly glances at young men across the swathed dust of Mycerinus [?]. They pass with flippant comments the illuminated MSS.—the labours of years—and stand under Rameses the Great, joking. Democratic government may be justice to man, but it will probably merge in proletarian, and when these people are our masters it will lead to more of this contempt, and possibly be the utter ruin of art and literature! . . . Looking, when I came out, at the Oxford Music Hall, an hour before the time of opening, there was already a queue."

"May 3. Sunday. Em and I lunch at the Jeunes' to see the house they have just moved into—79 Harley St. Sun came in hot upon us through back windows, the blinds not being yet up. Frederic Harrison called afterwards. He is leaving London to live in the country."

During the month of May he was much impressed by a visit paid with his friend Dr. (later Sir) T. Clifford Allbutt, then a Commissioner in Lunacy, to a large private lunatic asylum, where he had intended to stay only a quarter of an hour, but became so interested in the pathos

of the cases that he remained the greater part of the day. He talked to "the gentleman who was staying there of his own will, to expose the devices of the Commissioners; to the old man who offers snuff to everybody; to the scholar of high literary aims, as sane in his conversation as any of us; to the artist whose great trouble was that he could not hear the birds sing; 'which as you will see, Mr. Hardy, is hard on a man of my temperament'; and, on the women's side, listened to their stories of their seduction; to the Jewess who sang to us; to the young woman who, with eyes brimming with reproach, said to the doctor, 'When are you going to let me out of this?'" [Hardy appealed for a re-examination of her, which was done afterwards.] Then came the ladies who thought themselves queens—less touching cases, as they were quite happy—one of them, who was really a Plantagenet by descent, perversely insisted on being considered a Stuart. All the women seemed prematurely dried, faded, *flétries*."

In June he visited Stockwell Training College. "A pretty custom among the girls here is that of each senior student choosing *a daughter* from the list of junior girls who are coming. The senior is *mother* to the daughter for the whole year, and looks after her. Sometimes the pair get fond of each other; at other times not. I gather that they are chosen blindly before arrival, from the names only. There must be singular expectancies, confrontings, and excitements resulting therefrom."

In July he took Mrs. Hardy to the balcony of the Athenæum Club to see the German Emperor William II. pass to the City; the next day he met W. E. Henley at the Savile. "He is paler, and his once brown locks are getting iron-grey." On the 13th, lunching at Lady Wynford's, Grosvenor Square, Hardy discovered, or thought he did, that the ceiling of the drawing-room contained oval paintings by Angelica Kauffmann, and that the house was built by the Adams; "I was amused by Ld. Wynford,

who told me he would not live in Dorset for £50,000 a year, and wanted me to smoke cigarettes made of tobacco from Lebanon—'same as smoked by Laurence Oliphant'. Wynford's nose is two sides of a spherical triangle in profile." In the same week, on a visit with his wife to G. F. Watts, the painter, he was much struck with his host; "that old small man with a grey coat and black velvet skull-cap, who, when he saw one of his picture-frames pressing against a figure on canvas, moved it away gently, as if the figure could feel."

"Dining at the Milnes-Gaskells', Lady Catherine told me that the Webbs of Newstead have buried the skulls that Byron used to drink from, but that the place seems to throw 'a sort of doom on the family'. I then told her of the tragic Damers of the last century, who owned Abbey property, and thought she rather shrank from what I said; I afterwards remembered to my dismay that her own place was an Abbey." Hardy, however, found later that this was only a moment's mood, she being as free from superstitions as any woman.

"*July 19.* Note the weight of a landau and pair, the coachman in his grey great-coat, footman ditto. All this mass of matter is moved along with brute force and clatter through a street congested and obstructed, to bear the *petite* figure of the owner's young wife in violet velvet and silver trimming, slim, small; who could be easily carried under a man's arm, and who, if held up by the hair and slipped out of her clothes, carriage, etc. etc., aforesaid, would not be much larger than a skinned rabbit, and of less use.

"At Mary Jeune's lunch to-day sat between a pair of beauties. Mrs. A. G—— with her violet eyes, was the more seductive; Mrs. R. C—— the more vivacious. The latter in yellow: the former in pale brown, and more venust and warm-blooded than Mrs. C——, who is large-eyed, somewhat slight, with quick impulsive motions, and

who neglects the dishes and the coffee because possessed by some idea." At another luncheon or dinner at this time "the talk was entirely political—of when the next election would be—of the probable Prime Minister—of ins and outs—of Lord This and the Duke of That—everything except the people for whose existence alone these politicians exist. Their welfare is never once thought of."

The same week; "After a day of headache, went to I——'s Hotel to supper. This is one of the few old taverns remaining in London, whose frequenters after theatre-closing know each other, and talk across from table to table. The head waiter is called William. There is always something homely when the waiter is called William. He talks of his affairs to the guests, as the guests talk of theirs to him. He has whiskers of the rare old mutton-chop pattern, and a manner of confidence. He has shaved so many years that his face is of a bluish soap-colour, and if wetted and rubbed would raise a lather of itself. . . . Shakespeare is largely quoted at the tables; especially 'How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?' Theatrical affairs are discussed neither from the point of view of the audience, nor of the actors, but from a third point—that of the recaller of past appearances.

"Old-fashioned country couples also come in, their fathers having recommended the tavern from recollections of the early part of the century. They talk on innocently-friendly terms with the theatrical young men, and handsome ladies who enter with them as their 'husbands', after the play."

They annexed to their London campaign this year a visit to Sir Brampton and Lady Camilla Gurdon at Grundesburgh Hall, Suffolk—a house standing amid green slopes timbered with old oaks. The attraction was its possession of the most old-fashioned and delightful—probably Elizabethan—garden with high buttressed walls that Hardy had ever seen, which happily had been left

road in passing it, by yeens & emerald oaks, but it was visible
enough up here. From the middle of the building a flat-
topped octagonal tower ascended against the east-horizon,
towered from this spot, on its shady side against the light
it seemed a blot on the city's beauty. ^{Yet it was with this blot}
~~it was not with the beauty, that the two gosses were~~ ~~the two gosses~~
~~concerned.~~

Upon the cornice of the tower, a tall staff was fixed, & on this
~~staff~~ Their eyes were rivetted ^{on it.} a few minutes after he had
struck something shot up the staff, & extended itself upon the breeze.
It was a black flag, & the President of the Immortals (in Eschylean phrase)
had ended his sport with Tess. And the D'Urberville knights
"justice" was done. The two speechless sages bent themselves down
to the earth, as if in prayer, & remained thus a long time, ^{as their tombs underwent} ~~absolutely~~
motionless; the flag continued to wave silently. As soon as they had
straightened they arose, joined hands again, & went on.
The End.

unimproved and unchanged, owing to the Hall having been used merely as a farm-house for a century or two, and hence neglected. The vegetables were planted in the middle of square plots surrounded by broad green alleys, and screened by thickets and palisades of tall flowers, "so that one does not know any vegetables are there".

Hardy spent a good deal of time in August and the autumn correcting *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* for its volume form, which process consisted in restoring to their places the passages and chapters of the original MS. that had been omitted from the serial publication. The name "Talbothays", given to the dairy, was based on that of a farm belonging to his father, which, however, had no house on it at that time.

In September he and his wife paid a visit to his friend Sir George Douglas at Springwood Park, in fulfilment of a long promise, passing on their way north by the coast-line near Holy Isle or Lindisfarne, at that moment glowing reddish on a deep blue sea under the evening sun, with all the romance of *Marmion* about its aspect. It was the place which he afterwards urged Swinburne to make his headquarters, as being specially suited for him—a Northumbrian—an idea which Swinburne was much attracted by, though he owned that "to his great shame" he had never been on the isle. They had a very charming time in Scotland, visiting many Scott scenes, including Edie Ochiltree's grave, and one that Hardy had always been anxious to see—Smailho'me Tower—the setting of the "Eve of St. John"—a ballad which was among the verse he liked better than any of Scott's prose. At Springwood they met at dinner one evening old Mr. Usher, aged eighty-one, who had known Scott and Lady Scott well, and whose father had sold Scott the land called Huntley Burn. He said that when he was a boy Scott asked him to sing, which he did; and Scott was so pleased that he gave him a pony. When Hardy wondered why Lady Scott should

have taken the poet's fancy, Mr. Usher replied grimly, "She wadna' ha' taken mine!"

They finished this autumn visit by a little tour to Durham, Whitby, Scarborough, York, and Peterborough. At the last-mentioned place the verger "told us of a lady's body found in excavating, of which the neck and bosoms glistened, being coated with a species of enamel. She had been maid of honour to Catherine of Arragon who lies near. . . . In the train there was a woman of various ages—hands old, frame middle-aged, and face young. What her mean age was I had no conception of."

"*October 28.* It is the incompleteness that is loved, when love is sterling and true. This is what differentiates the real one from the imaginary, the practicable from the impossible, the Love who returns the kiss from the Vision that melts away. A man sees the Diana or the Venus in his Beloved, but what he loves is the difference."

"*October 30.* Howells and those of his school forget that a story *must* be striking enough to be worth telling. Therein lies the problem—to reconcile the average with that uncommonness which alone makes it natural that a tale or experience would dwell in the memory and induce repetition."

Sir Charles Cave was the judge at the Dorset assizes this autumn, and Hardy dined with him and Mr. Frith his marshal while they were in the town. Cave told him, among other things, that when he and Sir J. F. Stephen, also on the bench, were struggling young men the latter came to him and said a man was going to be hanged at the Old Bailey, jocularly remarking as an excuse for proposing to go and see it: "Who knows; we may be judges some day; and it will be well to have learnt how the last sentence of the law is carried out."

During the first week in November the Rev. Dr. Robertson Nicoll, editor of the *Bookman*, forwarded particulars of a discussion in the papers on whether

national recognition should be given to eminent men of letters. Hardy's reply was :

"I daresay it would be very interesting that literature should be honoured by the state. But I don't see how it could be satisfactorily done. The highest flights of the pen are mostly the excursions and revelations of souls unreconciled to life, while the natural tendency of a government would be to encourage acquiescence in life as it is. However, I have not thought much about the matter."

As the year drew to a close an incident that took place during the publication of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* as a serial in the *Graphic* might have prepared him for certain events that were to follow. The editor objected to the description of Angel Clare carrying in his arms, across a flooded lane, Tess and her three dairymaid companions. He suggested that it would be more decorous and suitable for the pages of a periodical intended for family reading if the damsels were wheeled across the lane in a wheelbarrow. This was accordingly done.

Also the *Graphic* refused to print the chapter describing the christening of the infant child of Tess. This appeared in Henley's *Scots Observer*, and was afterwards restored to the novel, where it was considered one of the finest passages.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles; a Pure Woman faithfully Presented was published complete about the last day of November, with what results Hardy could scarcely have foreseen, since the book, notwithstanding its exceptional popularity, was the beginning of the end of his career as a novelist.

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